

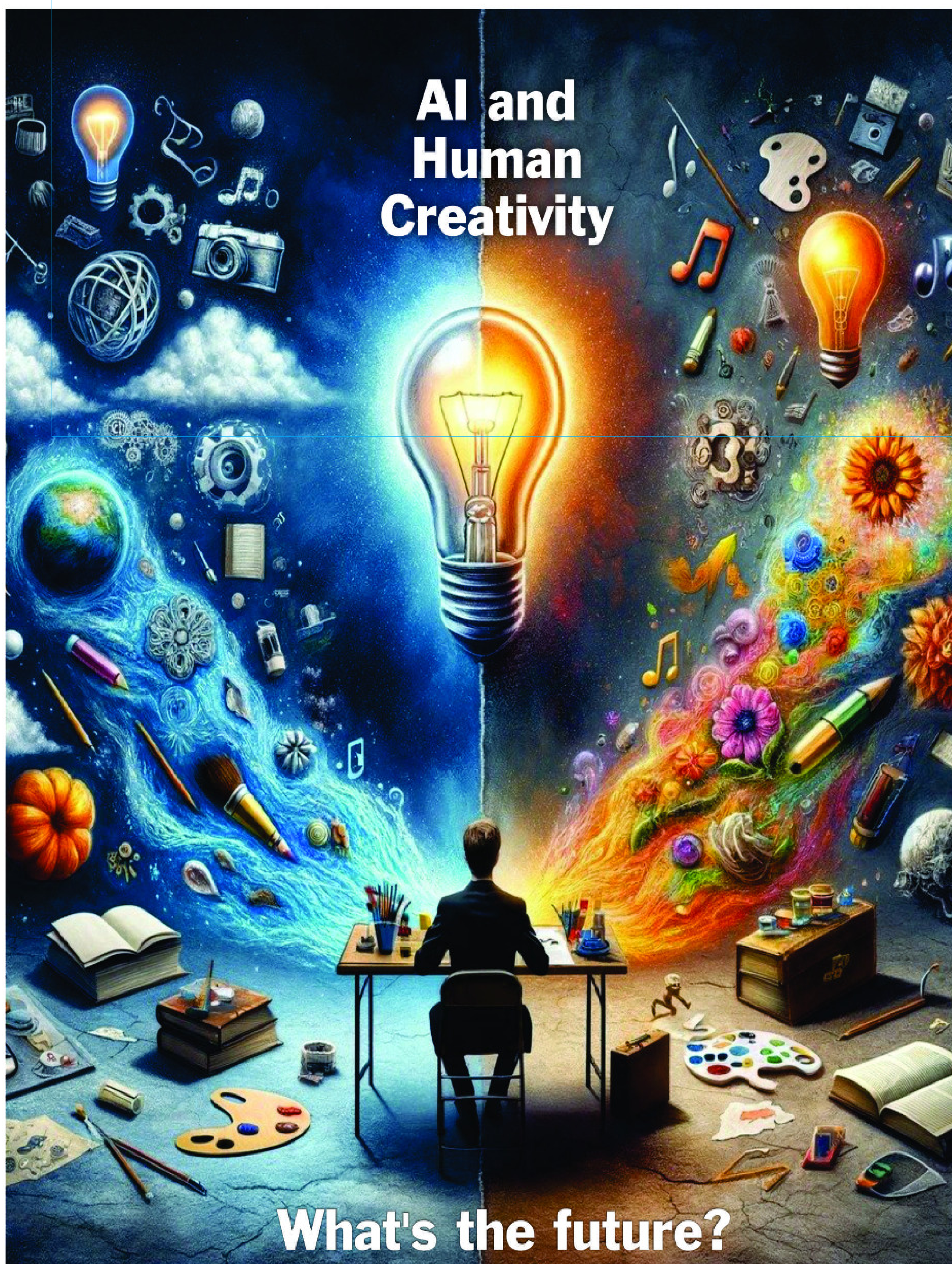
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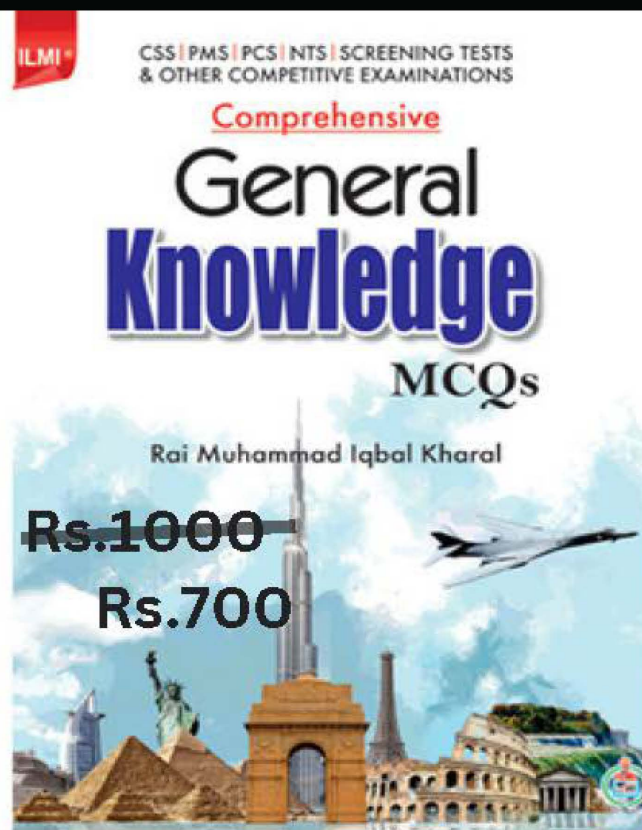
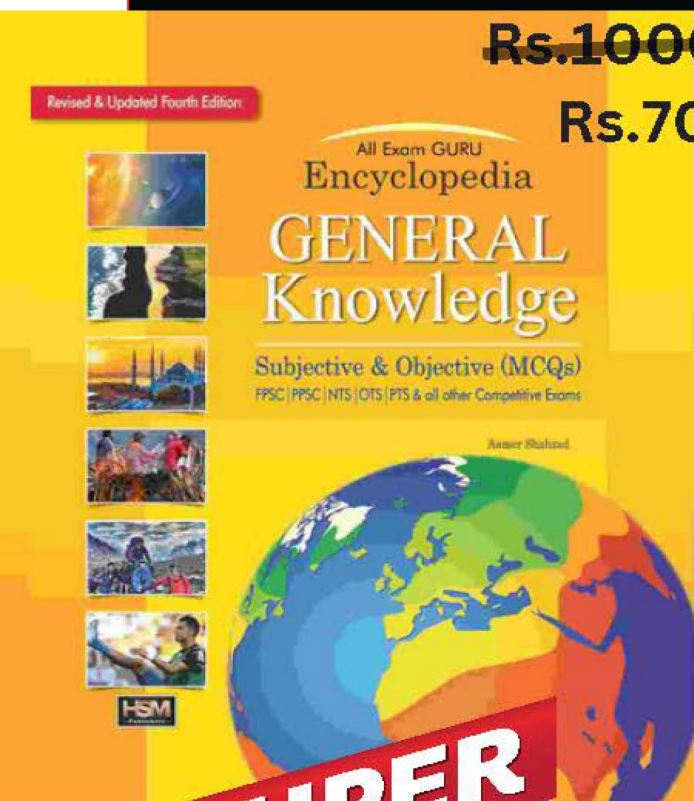
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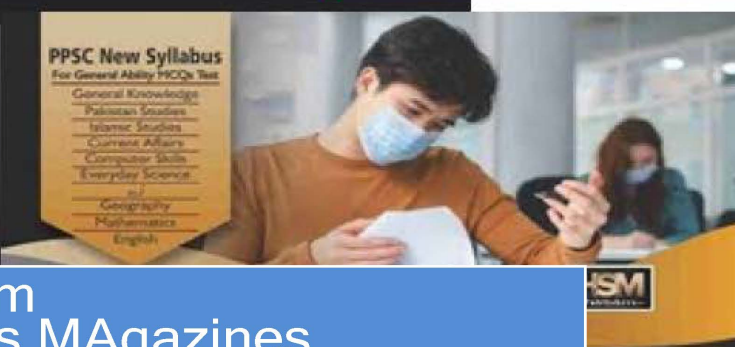
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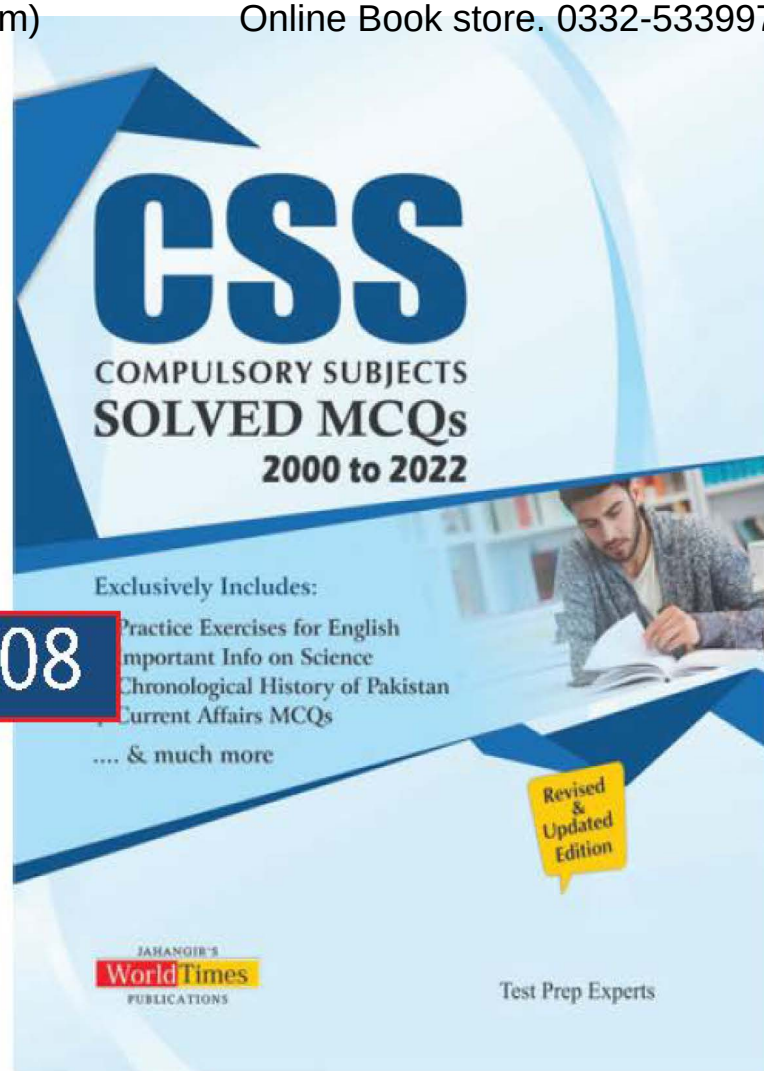
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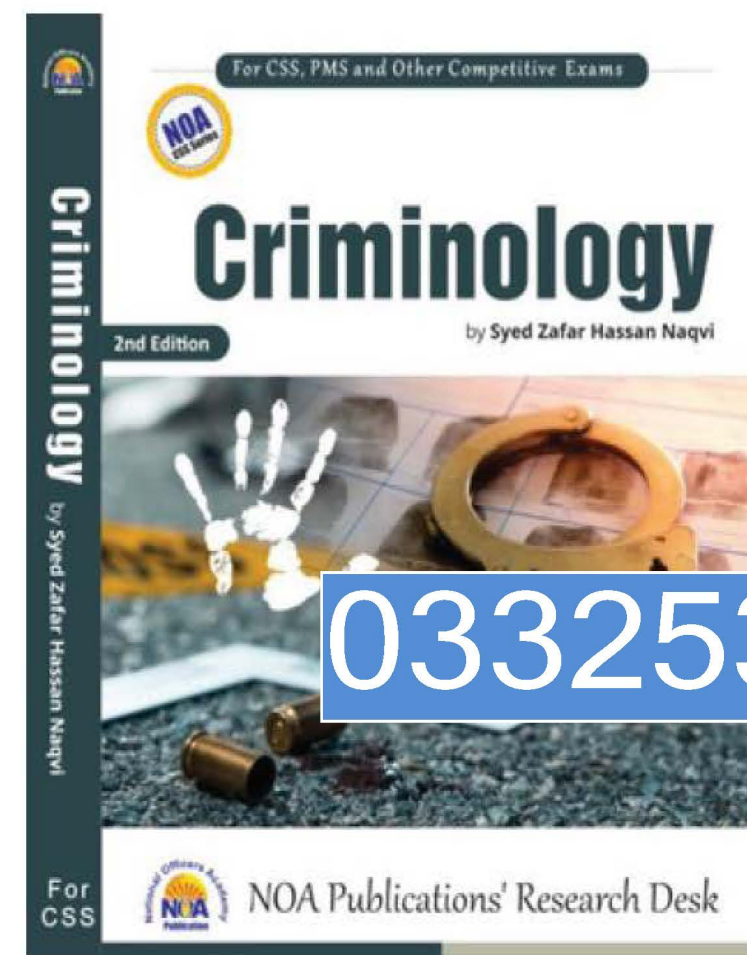


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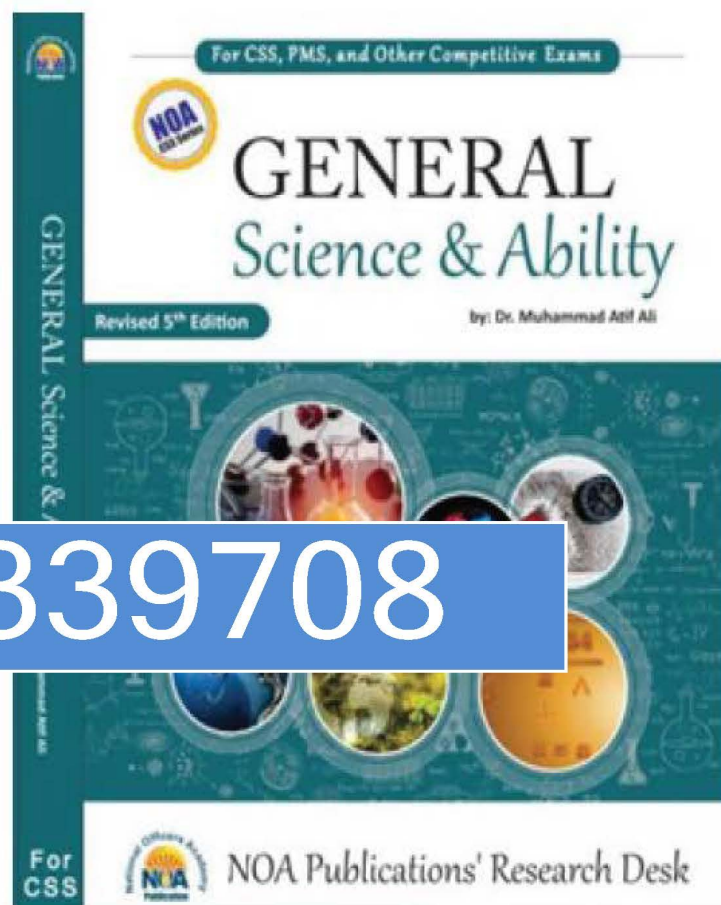
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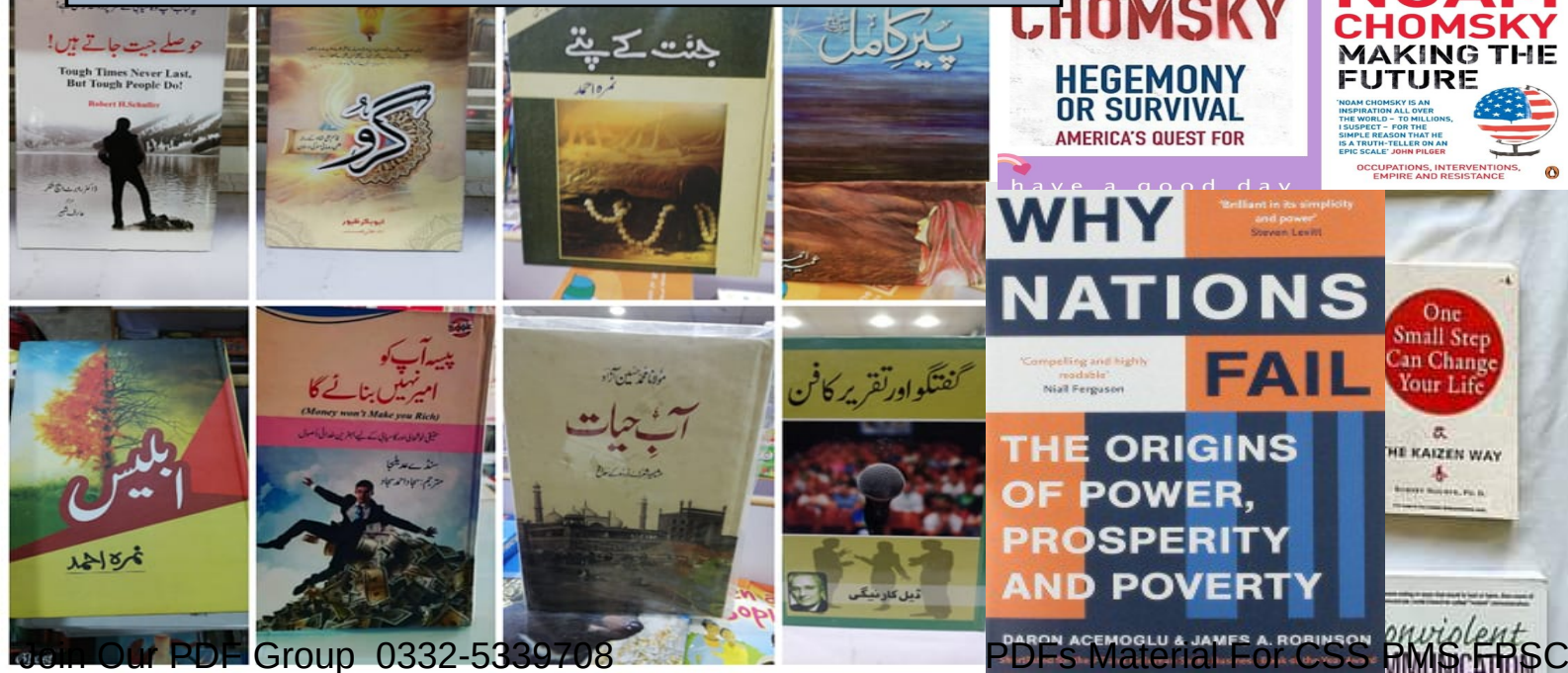
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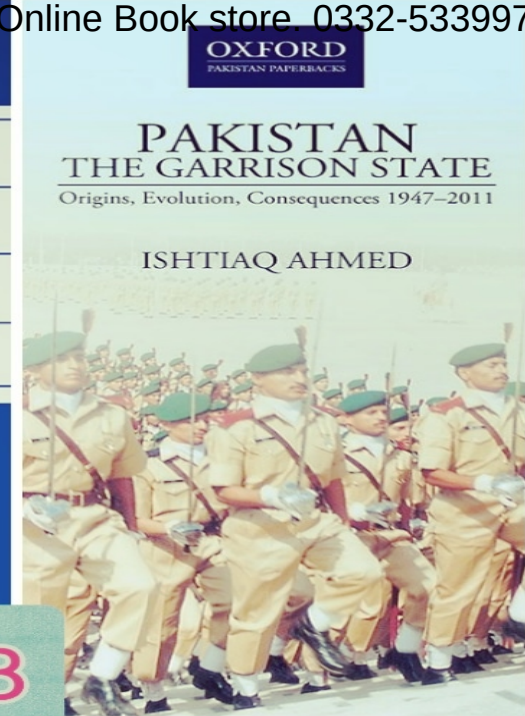
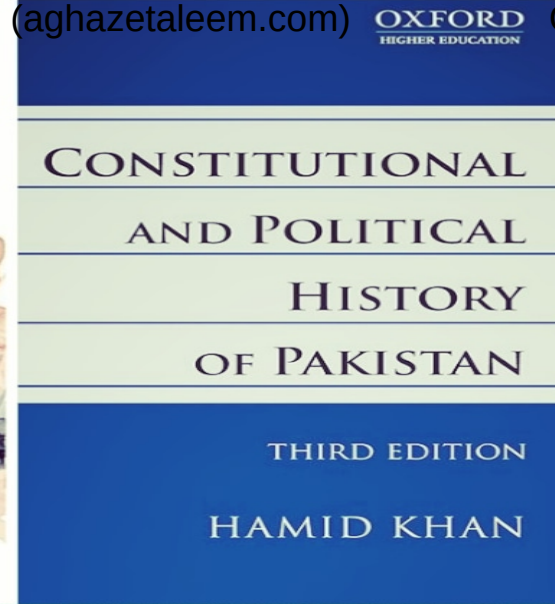
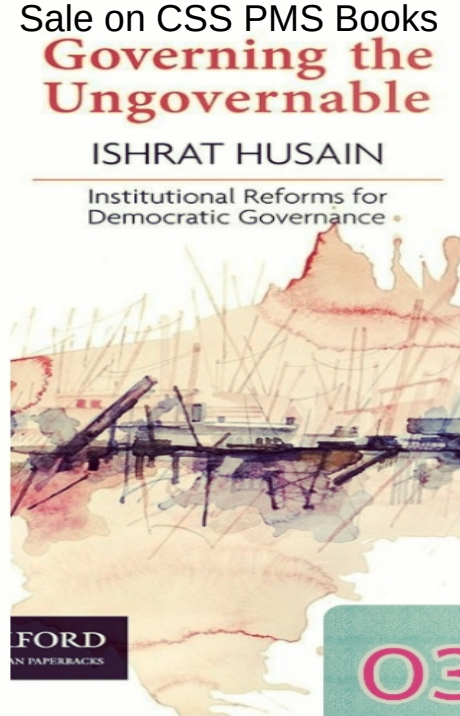
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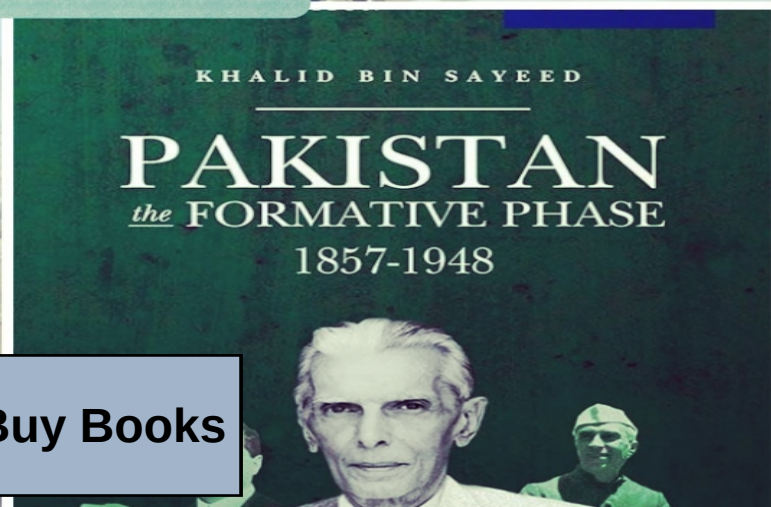
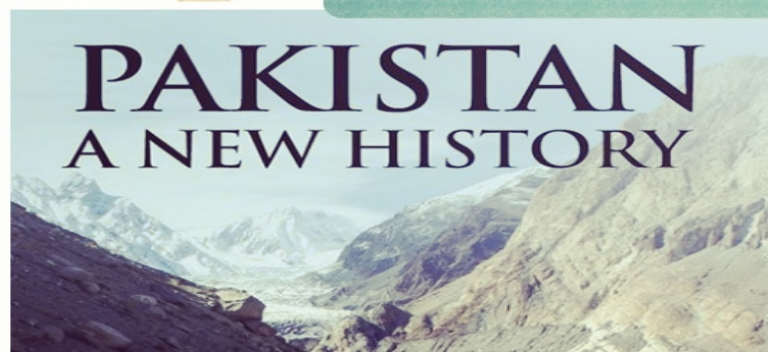
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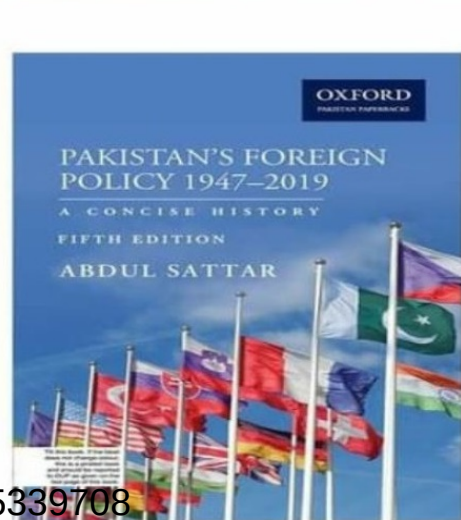
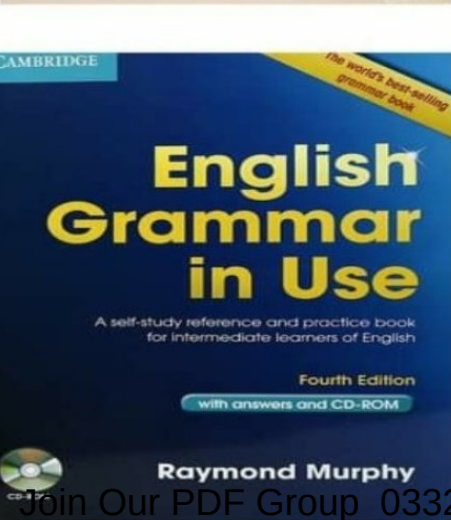
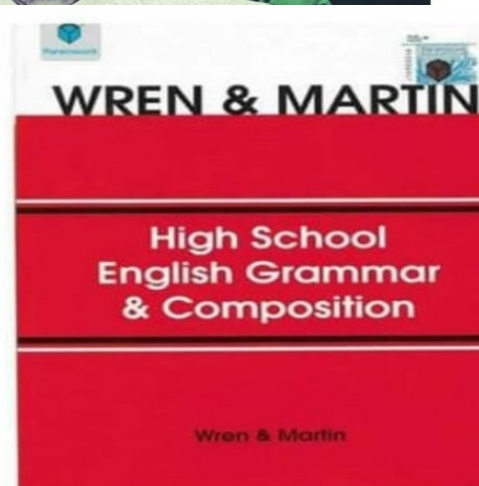
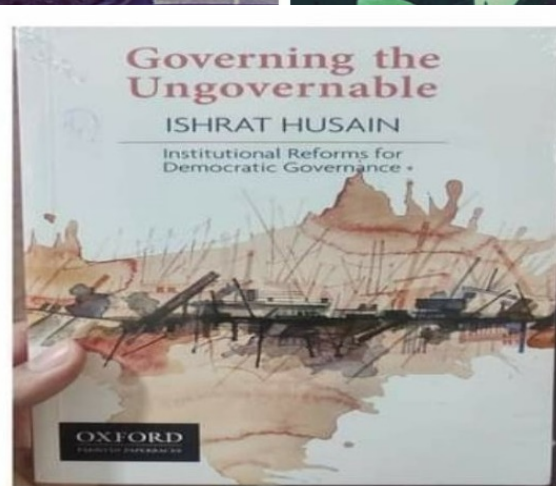
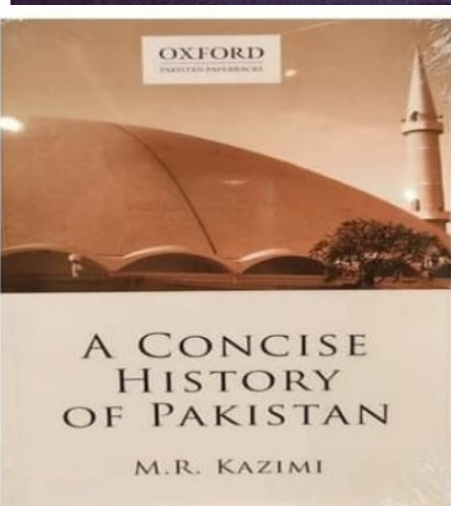




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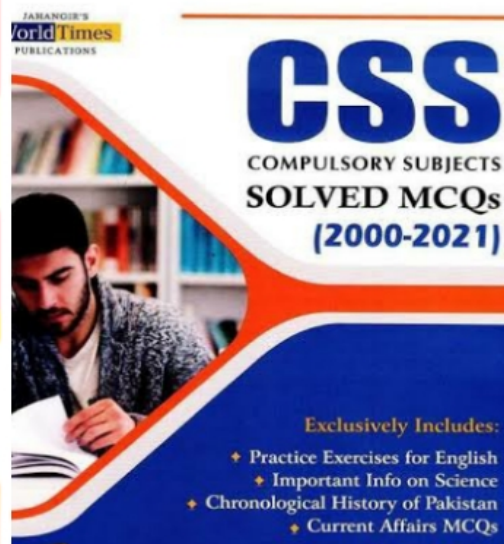


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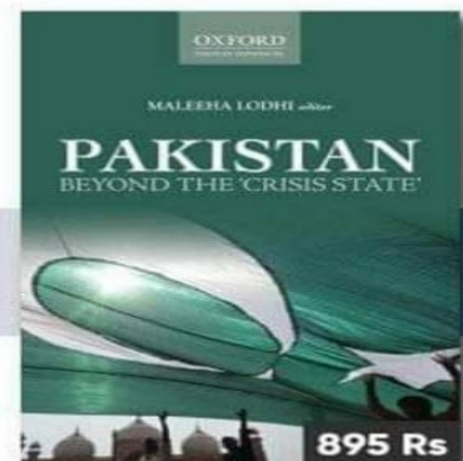
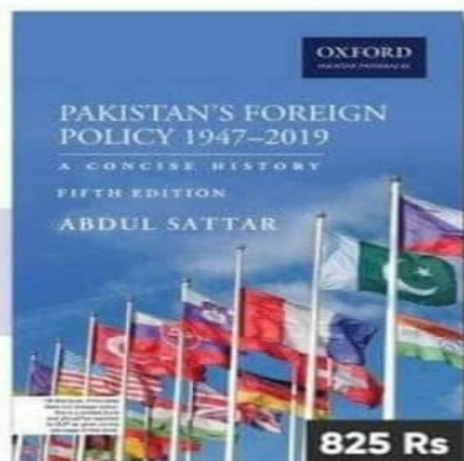
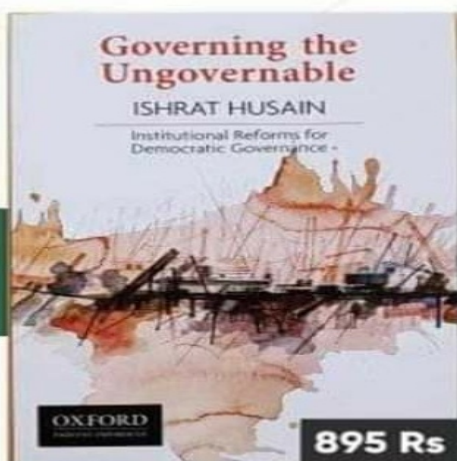
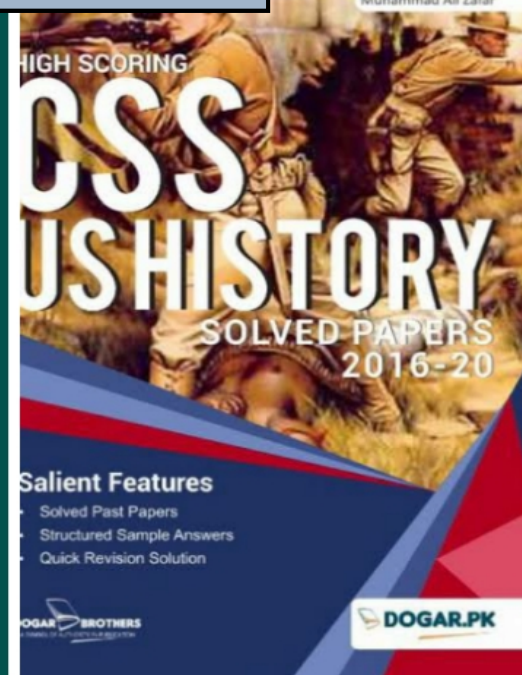
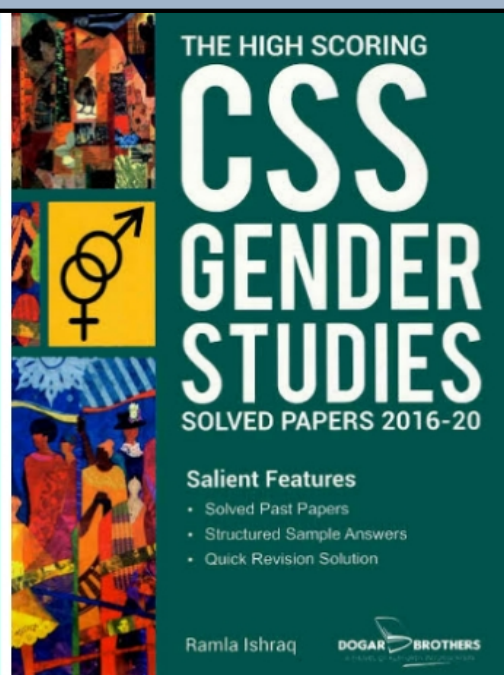
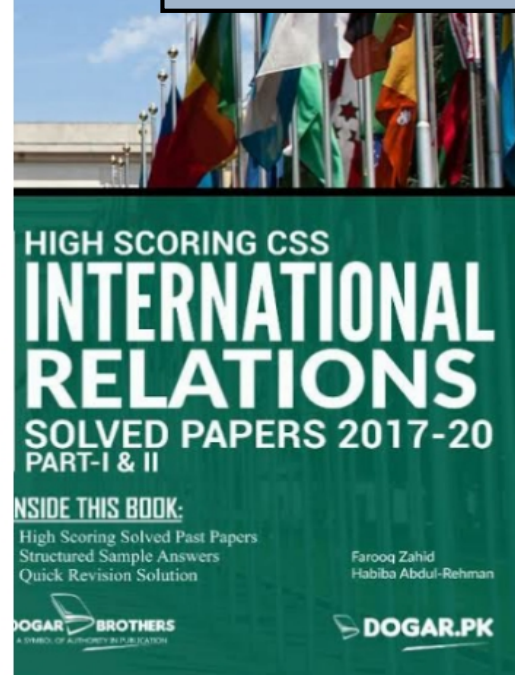




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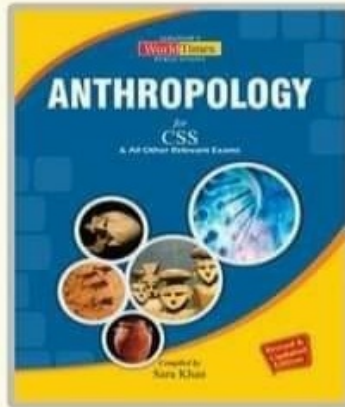
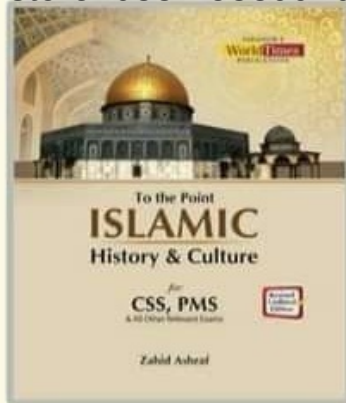
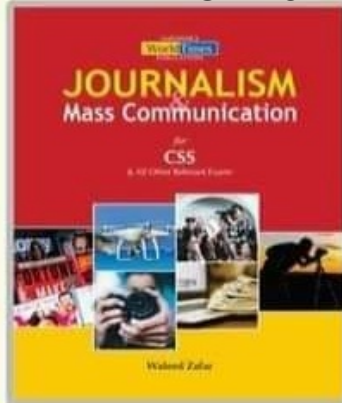
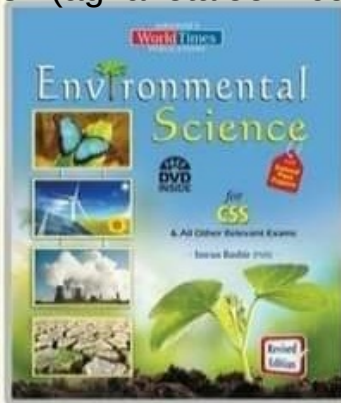
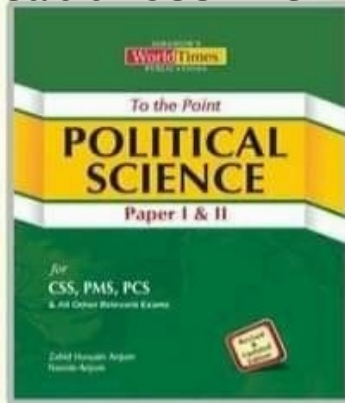
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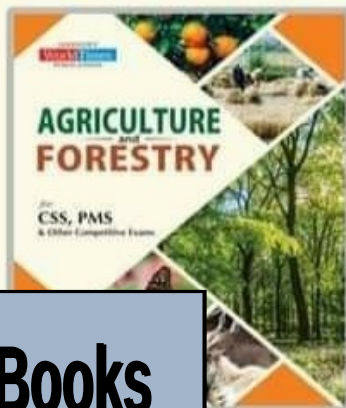
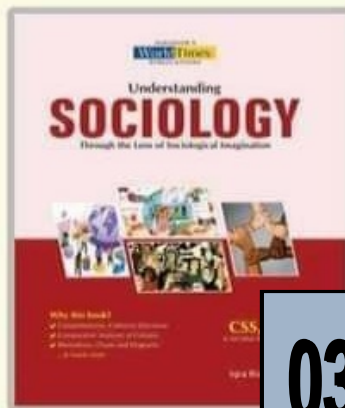
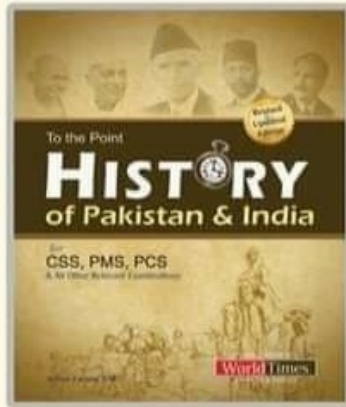
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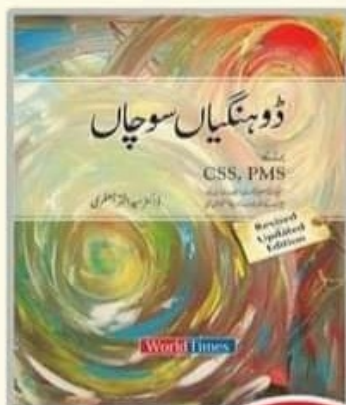
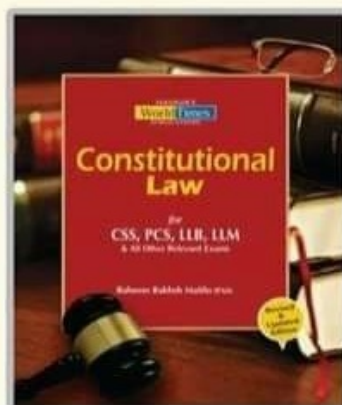
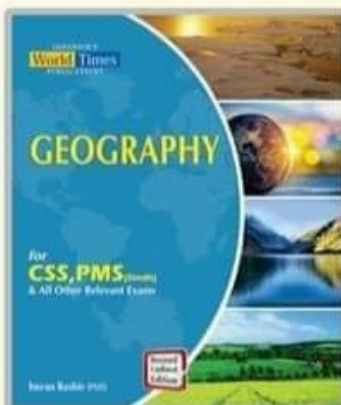
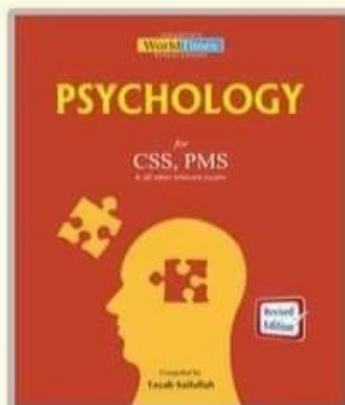
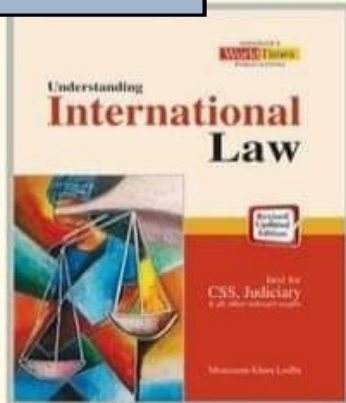
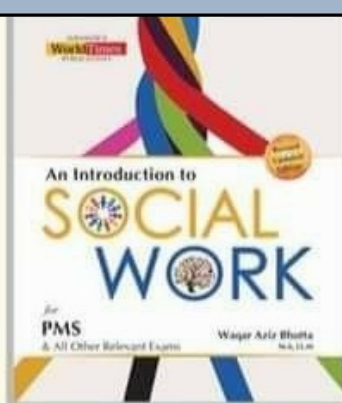
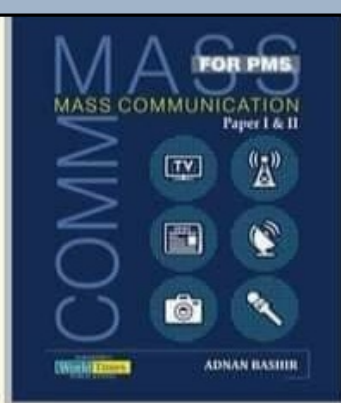
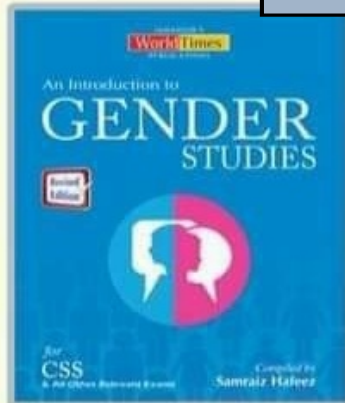
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EDITORIAL

The Charter of Economy

The new government has assumed the onerous responsibility of steering the country through the multifarious crises at a time when the country's economy is in a volatile condition after going through a multi-year crisis. A glimpse of the situation can be had from the fact that the country's GDP shrank in 2023 amid high debt, a balance-of-payments crisis and soaring inflation that peaked at near 40% before falling back to its current rate of around 23%. The gravity of the situation has been further exposed by the recent UN Human Development Index, on which Pakistan's position has dropped from 161, where it stood since 2021, to 164 out of 193 countries. And it's even more telling that of all the countries in the region – Nepal (146), India (134), Bangladesh (129), Sri Lanka (78) – only Afghanistan (182) is placed lower than Pakistan.

Since the report quantifies country-by-country progress based on economic and non-economic factors, especially education and income indexes, it's very concerning that even a country like Sri Lanka, which defaulted in 2022, is ahead of Pakistan.

To get the country out of the financial trap, the new government needs to bring about some urgent structural reforms so as to put the country on the path to economic recovery. Although the road ahead seems quite tortuous, the good thing is that the new setup has shown strong grit and resolve to surmount the challenge. In his first speech after being elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan for a second term, Shehbaz Sharif spoke of Pakistan's burgeoning debt, saying it would be his government's top priority to resolve the economic woes of the nation of 241 million people. He acknowledged that big challenges lay ahead in Pakistan's path, but they could be overcome "if we come together and decide to change the country's fate" by taking it to its rightful position.

And, it is, indeed, indubitably true that the leadership of our political parties as well as the powers that be need to get united to get the country out of the financial quagmire. None can deny that the current state of our economy cannot afford that our leaders keep wrangling on petty political issues and let the economic rot further putrefy. We must understand that the IMF, the World Bank and other financial institutions and friendly countries can help us to a certain extent, but beyond that, we have to help ourselves.

One wrong decision by a government, especially in the domain of the economy, can cost the country dearly and push the country back by years. Then, it becomes a mighty challenge for successive governments to bring the state of affairs back to its previous position. Therefore, it is imperative that all the political parties of the country avoid haggling and political point scoring. They should rather come towards a charter of economy under which some pragmatic policies should be formulated goals and some realistic targets set in consultation with industrialists and other stakeholders. If the political leadership of the country prioritizes only its own interests instead of the collective interests of the nation, then our economic wounds will continue to fester. There will be only the futile ritual of making budgets and getting them passed for a few years. If we have to drive the vehicle of national development in the right direction, our leaders will have to become the engine that will get power from the public who will support them in all their endeavours.

Given its location, landscape, environment, weather, shores and fertile land, Pakistan had always been the most potential and business friendly destination offering volumes of dividends to investors and businessmen.

Although fluctuating policies of the past landed this potential state into serious economic crunch with putting it back on track becoming a gigantic task, yet it can be vibrant again if consistent, holistic and result oriented approach is adopted.



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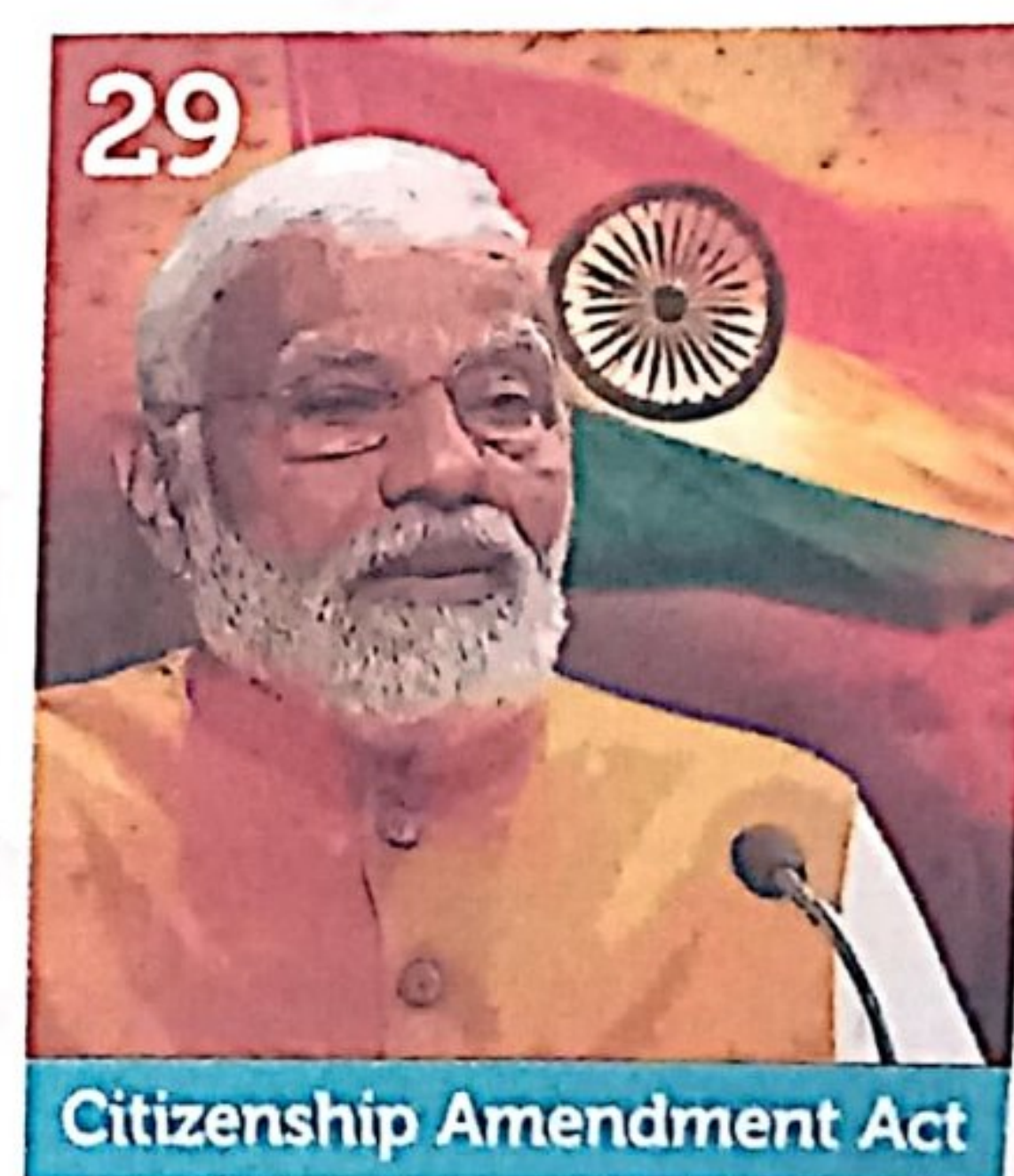
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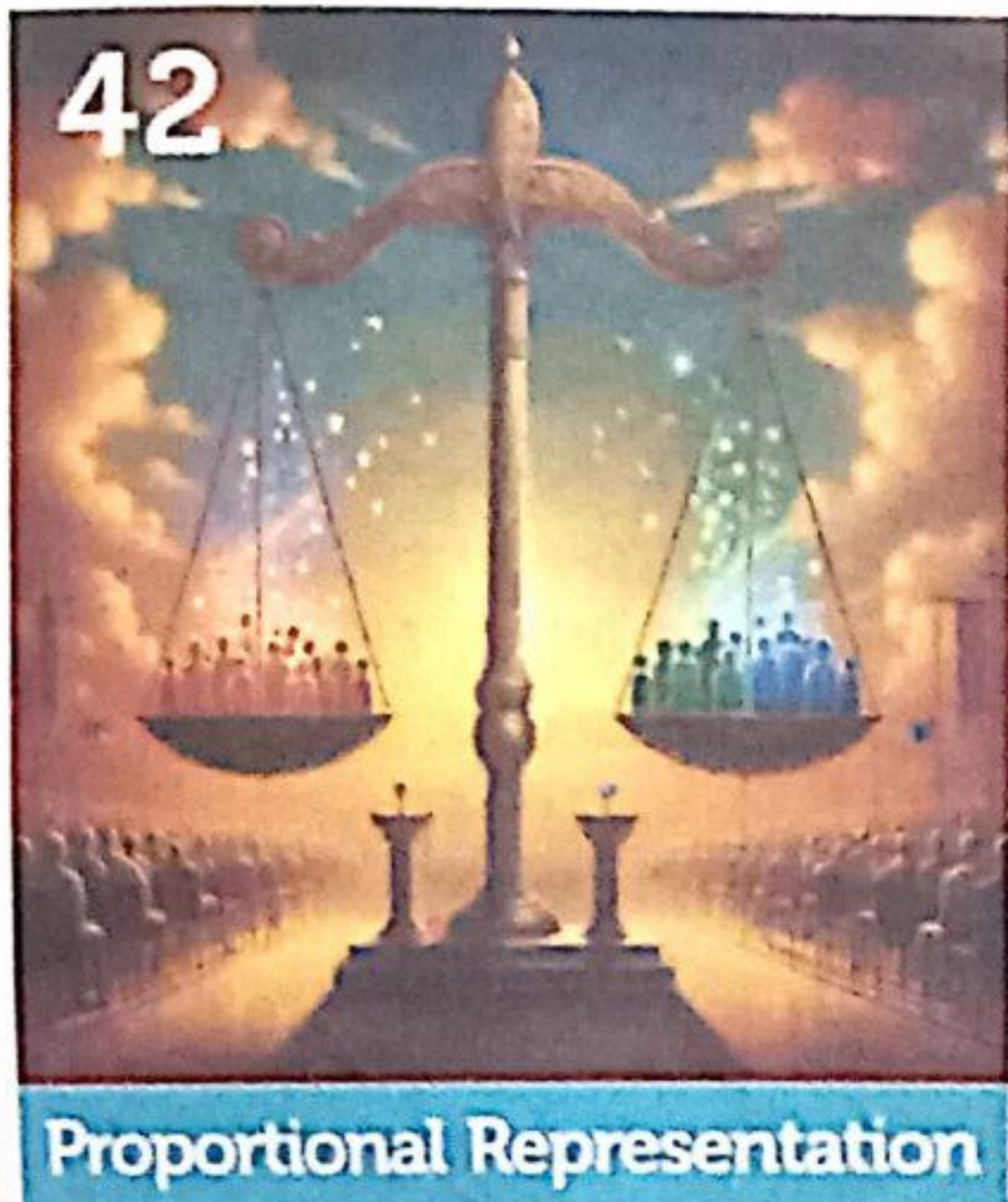
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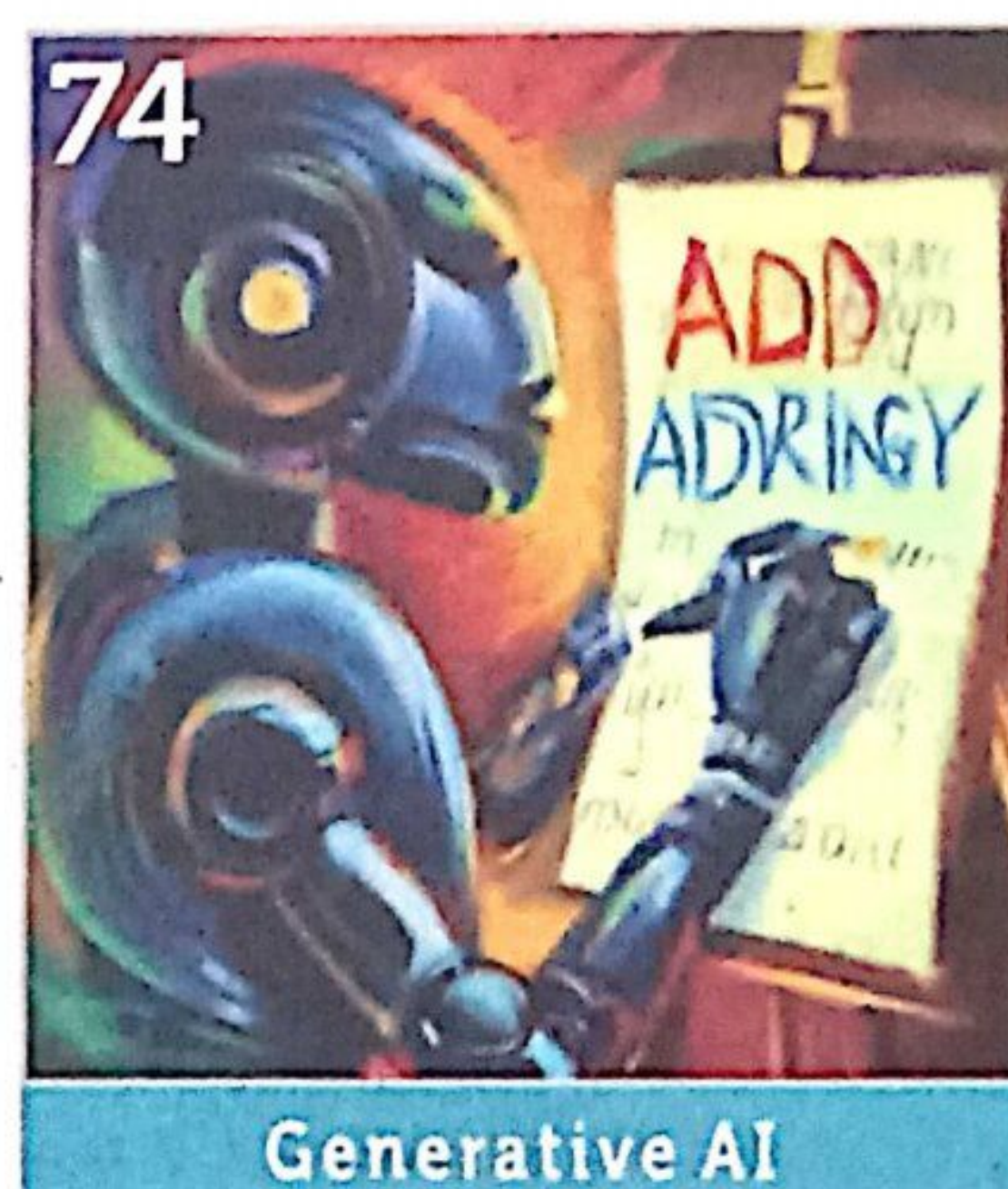


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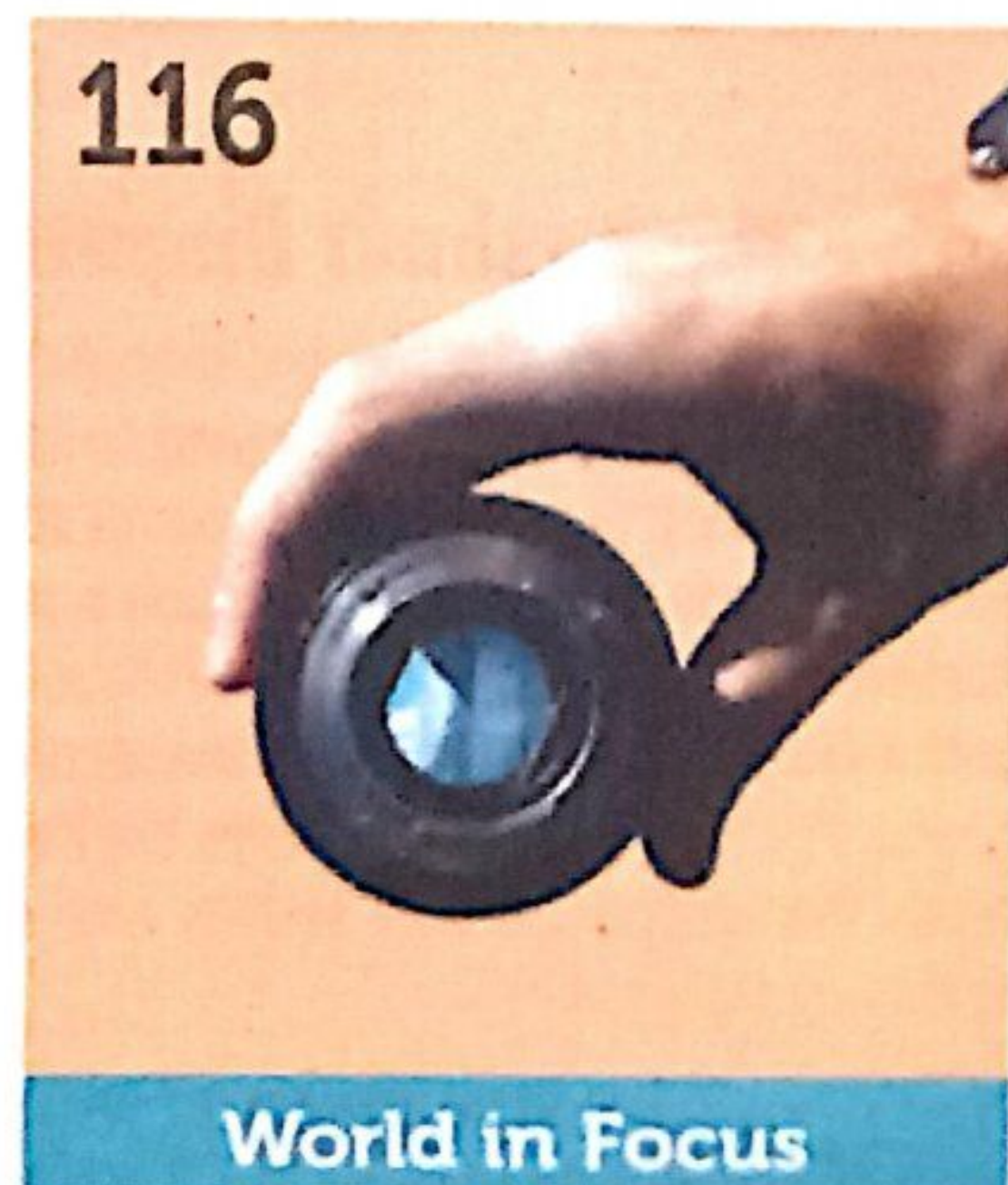
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LETTER to the EDITOR

My Heart Aches

As Israel continues to rain death and destruction upon the innocent people of Gaza, the enclave has become an open death trap. According to the UN's World Food Programme head Cindy McCain, Gazans "are starving to death right now [...] the speed at which this manmade hunger and malnutrition crisis has ripped through Gaza is terrifying." Moreover, as per a report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification partnership, children in Gaza face "extremely critical health conditions ... exposing them to high risk nutritional deterioration". The situation being as dire as it is, people desperate to provide sustenance for their families are using bird feed and cattle fodder as food. This obviously is the result of strict restrictions Israel has imposed on the entry and distribution of food in the besieged enclave, exacerbated by displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes. Clearly, concurrent with military onslaught Israel is using food as a weapon of war, without a care about international law which makes it a war crime. Its unmistakable goal is to kill or drive out all Palestinians from their ancestral lands for further expansion of the settler state. Yet the countries which could exert their influence, especially Israel's closest ally the US, are playing along. The US could force Israel to open all Gaza borders for food aid, but had no such intention.

Tayyaba Wajid, Jhelum

Conserving the Groundwater

More than 70% of domestic water needs in Pakistan are met from groundwater resources but this rich natural source of freshwater is depleting at an alarming rate. Although groundwater resources have played a key role in agricultural production, unimpeded pumping of groundwater aquifers, has led to the rapid depletion of water table which had many negative environmental and economic consequences. Since the recent climate change trends and soaring population compounded with rising food demands and improved living standards had substantially increased pressure on water resources, there is a pressing need to properly manage and recharge depleting water table. To combat the situation, Pakistan requires management systems and effective policies which execute groundwater conservation and monitoring. The groundwater policy should be based on legal status and ownership (public or private), as well as factors such as water users, interrelated surface water features, and land uses in aquifer recharge areas. Moreover, coordinating, harmonizing and sharing data through cooperation between neighbouring countries is essential in formulating management plans. The authorities concerned must evaluate and recognize the role of promoting conservation of groundwater resources in compliance with existing conditions while making optimal use of limited financial resources through targeted initiatives.

Waqar Azam Raja, Murree

The Need to Empower Women

We are living in a world where gender inequality is still the biggest problem and a prime reason of our backwardness. Especially, in this age of soaring inflation, a man cannot single-handedly earn money to meet the requirements and demands of his family, a woman can be of great help if she is counted in. Her participation in the workforce will not only help to accelerate progress but also to fight the taboo of inequality. Today, women are leaders; they are not only flying planes and leading businesses but also making difference in the world which was once just an imagination. It is encouraging that today, the Pakistani society is making gradual strides, actively involving women in enhancing both the society and the economy. Empowering women - within the sphere of Islamic teachings - is crucial for boosting and encouraging their involvement in decision-making processes, a pivotal factor for the socio-economic development of society. In Pakistan, women make up approximately 50 percent of the population. This segment of our community still faces economic challenges because of limited access to education and job opportunities.

Fouzia Rafique, Thatta

Resolve the Kashmir Dispute

Kashmir is the core issue between the two nuclear-armed countries of Pakistan and India. The fascist BJP government in India is employing brutal and oppressive measures to intimidate the Kashmiri people and force them to stop pursuing their freedom struggle, but it will never succeed. Since the Kashmir dispute is a nuclear flashpoint, it needs to be resolved through a sustained dialogue process, especially because an amicable resolution is vital for peace and prosperity in the South Asian region. The leadership of both countries should show political wisdom and maturity and start a new beginning for the secure future of the people of South Asia in particular and whole of the humanity, in general. For that, it is vital to resolve the Kashmir dispute as per wishes of the oppressed Kashmiri people. The UN Secretary General should take serious note of the prevailing situation in IIOJK and play his role in making the two countries hold dialogue.

Irfanullah Marwat, Charsadda

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DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE

A look at the Lowy Institute's 2024 Global Diplomacy Index

How do nations project influence? Among the various forms of national power — economic, military and technological — diplomacy has been one of the most undercounted, and thus often overlooked, levers of influence. In today's more contested world, gaining diplomatic influence in various parts of the world has emerged as the most important dimension of statecraft. Diplomatic influence is not only enabled by a country's presence abroad, but also by its ability to attract and host foreign missions at home. That is why diplomatic networks are expanding and deepening worldwide. This reflects the fact that, despite the ease of online connectivity, governments the world over continue to invest in face-to-face diplomacy and an on-the-ground presence. The release of the Lowy Institute's 2024 Global Diplomacy Index, which looks at the diplomatic efforts of 66 countries and territories, including those in Asia, members of the G20 and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), further corroborates this fact.

As per the Index, great-power rivalry between the world heavyweights is as prevalent in diplomacy as in other fields, with the United States and China dominating the rankings, as the latter has the most diplomatic posts abroad out of any country in the world — 274 to be precise — followed closely by the former that has 271 posts worldwide. China's rise to the top spot was rapid. In 2011, Beijing lagged behind Washington by 23 diplomatic posts. By 2019, China had surpassed the United States in having the world's largest diplomatic network. In 2021, China pulled further ahead, leading the United States by eight posts, but by 2023, the gap narrowed again to China ahead by just three posts.

The report shows that China is especially strong in Africa, East Asia, the Pacific and Central Asia. This is partly because the US pulled out of Afghanistan. However, the US has more diplomatic offices in Europe, North and Central America, and South Asia. In the Middle East and South America, China and the US have the same number of posts.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had a significant impact on its diplomatic network. Moscow has closed 14 of its posts abroad since launching its invasion in February 2022, largely as a result of deteriorating ties or diplomatic expulsions. Meanwhile, other Index countries collectively have closed 16 posts within Russia since the war began. The thinning of Russia's diplomatic connections will impede its ability to advance its global interests.

Other countries are also expanding their diplomatic networks. Türkiye, for example, moved up to the third spot this year from fifth last year. India made a jump too, now at rank 11 from 12 last year. These countries are adding more offices quickly, especially India, which has opened 11 new sites since 2021, with eight in Africa.

Pakistan grabbed the 27th position with 121 diplomatic missions abroad. Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by regional and global orders that are always changing, and this has a direct impact on the country's security. The evolving world order could bring a set of challenges for Pakistan, mainly

in terms of security, which it needs to address. And, for that, the country needs to extend its ties with global and regional states and explore more countries to expand its diplomatic influence as it would pave the way for more trade and investments which can be a panacea for all our economic woes.

The writer is a student of law.

Sr#	Country / Territory	Embassies / High Commissions	Consulates / Consulates General	Permanent Missions	Other Representations	Total Posts
1	China	173	91	8	2	274
2	United States	168	83	12	8	271
3	—	145	93	12	2	252
4	Japan	152	66	10	23	251
5	France	158	72	18	1	249
6	Russia	143	74	10	3	230
7	United Kingdom	156	51	11	7	225
8	Germany	148	56	11	2	217
9	Italy	124	74	8	0	206
10	Brazil	133	58	12	2	205
11	India	135	50	5	4	194
12	Spain	114	65	10	1	190
13	South Korea	114	60	5	8	187
14	Mexico	80	71	8	2	161
15	Canada	98	38	11	10	157
16	Argentina	87	54	7	2	150
17	Netherlands	106	28	10	5	149
18	European Union*	132	0	8	3	143
19	Switzerland	102	30	7	2	141
20	Hungary	87	43	7	3	140
21	Poland	91	33	9	2	135
22	Greece	85	39	9	1	134
23	Indonesia	92	34	3	1	130
24	Saudi Arabia	104	19	4	1	128
25	Portugal	75	42	9	1	127
26	Australia	85	33	4	2	124
27	Pakistan	89	29	3	0	121
28	Chile	73	41	6	1	121
29	Czechia	91	16	7	6	120
30	Colombia	63	49	5	0	117
31	South Africa	98	12	2	2	114
32	Belgium	83	18	8	4	113
33	Taiwan**	12	1	1	96	110
34	Israel	80	21	5	1	107
35	Malaysia	78	24	3	1	106
36	Austria	83	13	6	2	104
37	Sweden	87	8	7	0	102
38	Ireland	71	20	6	1	98
39	Thailand	65	28	3	1	97
40	Vietnam	67	22	4	1	94
41	Philippines	63	27	4	0	94
42	Norway	74	7	9	1	91
43	Finland	74	6	7	3	90
44	Denmark	66	16	6	2	90
445	Slovakia	63	9	8	2	82
46	Bangladesh	58	20	2	0	80
47	New Zealand	49	15	3	1	68
48	Lithuania	42	11	8	1	62
49	Sri Lanka	46	12	1	1	60
50	Slovenia	43	7	7	1	58
51	Costa Rica	42	5	4	1	52
52	Mongolia	33	13	1	3	50
53	Singapore	29	16	4	1	50
54	Latvia	38	1	7	0	46
55	Estonia	38	2	6	0	46
56	Myanmar	38	6	2	0	46
57	Luxembourg	35	4	6	1	46
58	North Korea	39	1	3	0	43
59	Cambodia	28	12	3	0	43
60	Brunei	35	4	3	0	42

World Happiness

Report 2024

A look at its key findings

HAPPIEST IN THE WORLD

Finland was the world's happiest nation for a seventh straight year, with Nordic countries keeping their places among the most cheerful, with Denmark, Iceland and Sweden trailing Finland.

For the first time since the report was published more than a decade ago, the United States and Germany were not among the 20 happiest nations, coming in 23rd and 24th respectively.

TOP 10		
Finland	1	7.741
Denmark	2	7.583
Iceland	3	7.525
Sweden	4	7.344
Israel	5	7.341
Netherlands	6	7.319
Norway	7	7.302
Luxembourg	8	7.122
Switzerland	9	7.06
Australia	10	7.057

It noted that the happiest nations no longer included any of the world's largest countries

"In the top 10 countries only the Netherlands and Australia have populations over 15 million. In the whole of the top 20, only Canada and the UK have populations over 30 mn."

In broad terms, the rankings were loosely correlated with prosperity, but factors such as life expectancy, social bonds, personal freedom and corruption were influential as well.

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What is the report?

The annual World Happiness Report, launched in 2012 to support the UN's sustainable development goals, is based on data from US market research company Gallup, led by the University of Oxford. People in 143 countries are asked to evaluate their life on a scale from 0 to 10. Results from the past three years are averaged to create a ranking.

The biggest change, by region

From 2006-2010 to 2021-2023 changes in overall happiness varied greatly from country to country, ranging from increases as large as 1.8 points (Serbia) to decreases as large as 2.6 points (Afghanistan). Central and Eastern Europe had the largest increases, of the same size for all age groups. East Asia also had large increases, especially for the older population.

AND THE LEAST HAPPY

Afghanistan, plagued by a humanitarian catastrophe since the Taliban regained control in 2020, stayed at the bottom of the 143 countries surveyed. It was followed by Lebanon, Sierra Leone and Congo to make the bottom five.

Worst 5		
Pakistan	108	4.657
Congo	139	3.295
Sierra Leone	140	3.186
Lesotho	141	3.0186
Lebanon	142	2.707
Afghanistan	143	1.721

The young and lonely

Rising unhappiness among younger people was the cause for many countries, particularly in the west such as the United States, Germany, France, Canada, to see a massive dent in their rankings.

The US dropped out of the top 20 for the first time, falling to 23rd place from 15th last year, due to a big drop in wellbeing of those under 30.

Pakistan stood at 108 number. As per the report, the young and youth of Pakistan are the happiest among the population while old people are least happy. Moreover, Pakistan's ranking is the same as last year which shows that economic and political crisis witnessed by the country in 2023 did not have significant impact on happiness levels there.



The youth, especially in North America, are experiencing a mid-life crisis today.

— Jan-Frmanuel De Nève, a University of Oxford economics professor, one of the report's editors



Things to know about China's Two Sessions

Meaning of the CPPCC emblem

Four red flags and ribbons

represent the great unity and solidarity of all parties, organizations, ethnic groups, and social strata

A five-pointed star represents the leadership of the CPC

"1949" the founding year

A map of China and the Earth

represent the unity of the entire Chinese people, including the people of the HK SAR, the Macao SAR, and Taiwan, and overseas Chinese

A gear and ears of wheat

represent the worker-farmer alliance as the foundation

Things to know about China's Two Sessions

Two Sessions



The annual session of China's National People's Congress (NPC)



The annual session of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)

Two Sessions 2024

The second session of the 14th NPC will open on **March 5**.

The second session of the 14th National Committee of the CPPCC will open on **March 4**.

Things to know about China's Two Sessions

CPPCC

What is CPPCC

- A patriotic united front organization of the Chinese people
- A key mechanism for multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC
- An important channel for socialist consultative democracy
- A key component of the national governance system
- An institution designed with Chinese characteristics

Structure

The National Committee and local committees

Main functions

- Political consultation
- Democratic supervision
- Participation in and deliberation of state affairs

Term

The CPPCC National Committee is elected for a term of five years

Things to know about China's Two Sessions

NPC

What is NPC

The highest organ of the state power

Term

Each congress is elected for a term of five years

Functions

- To amend the Constitution & to supervise its enforcement
- To enact and amend basic laws governing criminal offenses, civil affairs, the State organs and other matters
- To elect, decide to appoint and remove from office members of central State organs
- To determine major State issues

Reinventing the United Nations

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Osman Khan

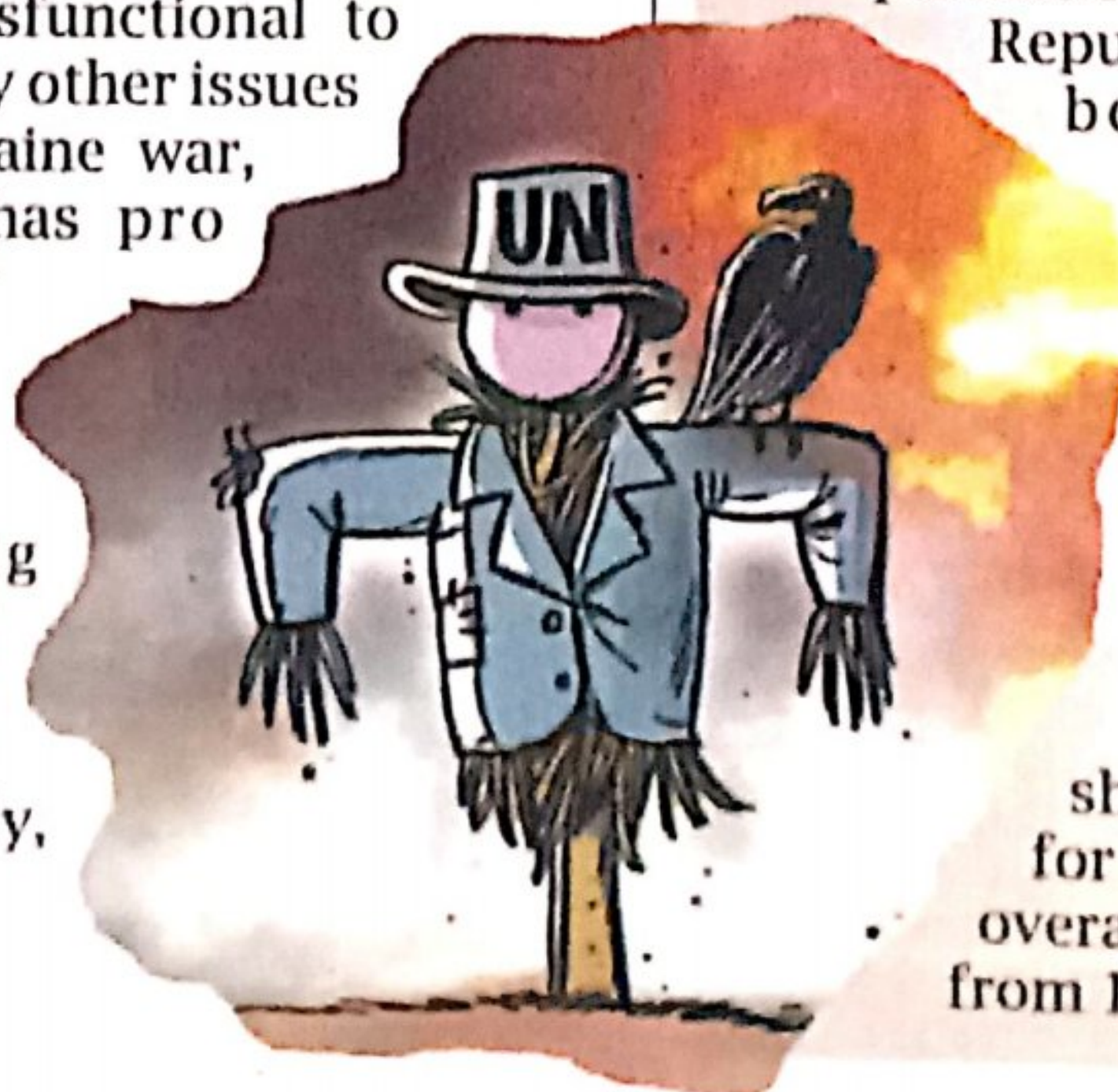
The near-total failure of the United Nations (UN) to cope with crises in recent years is adding to the growing frustration with the global body's ability to respond speedily in times of need. The UN is being ignored since most of the world has no interest in the body, perceiving it as a playground of the big five powers. The world has become multipolar, and important power centres are clear about their strategic autonomy and zones of influence. Former US president Donald Trump's persisting attacks on NATO have triggered new thinking in Europe about looking beyond the US security umbrella and creating their own military preparedness. Against this backdrop, it is understandable that many countries are calling for speeding up the efforts to reform the UN and its Security Council, both to reflect the realities of the contemporary global order.

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945, just after World War II. Currently made up of 193 member states, it is the only platform on Earth where all the world's nations can come together, discuss common problems and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity. But, unfortunately, either the nature of problems today is so complicated or some of the nations have become so strong that they do not care about the UN or its Charter. The most recent example is the Israeli genocide of Palestinians, which, despite full efforts, the UN could not stop. The Security Council has passed several resolutions in favour of Palestine long ago, but, Israel always refused to implement those. It means that the UN has failed or become dysfunctional to protect human lives. There are many other issues that are still unresolved like Ukraine war, Kashmir issue, etc. where the UN has proved impotent and ineffective.

Why are reforms needed?

Keeping in view the complexity and nature of problems being faced by the world in the prevailing geopolitics, the current UN structure is failing to achieve its original objectives. So, it is time to think wisely, smartly and collectively, to reform the UN.

1. Changing geopolitical situation

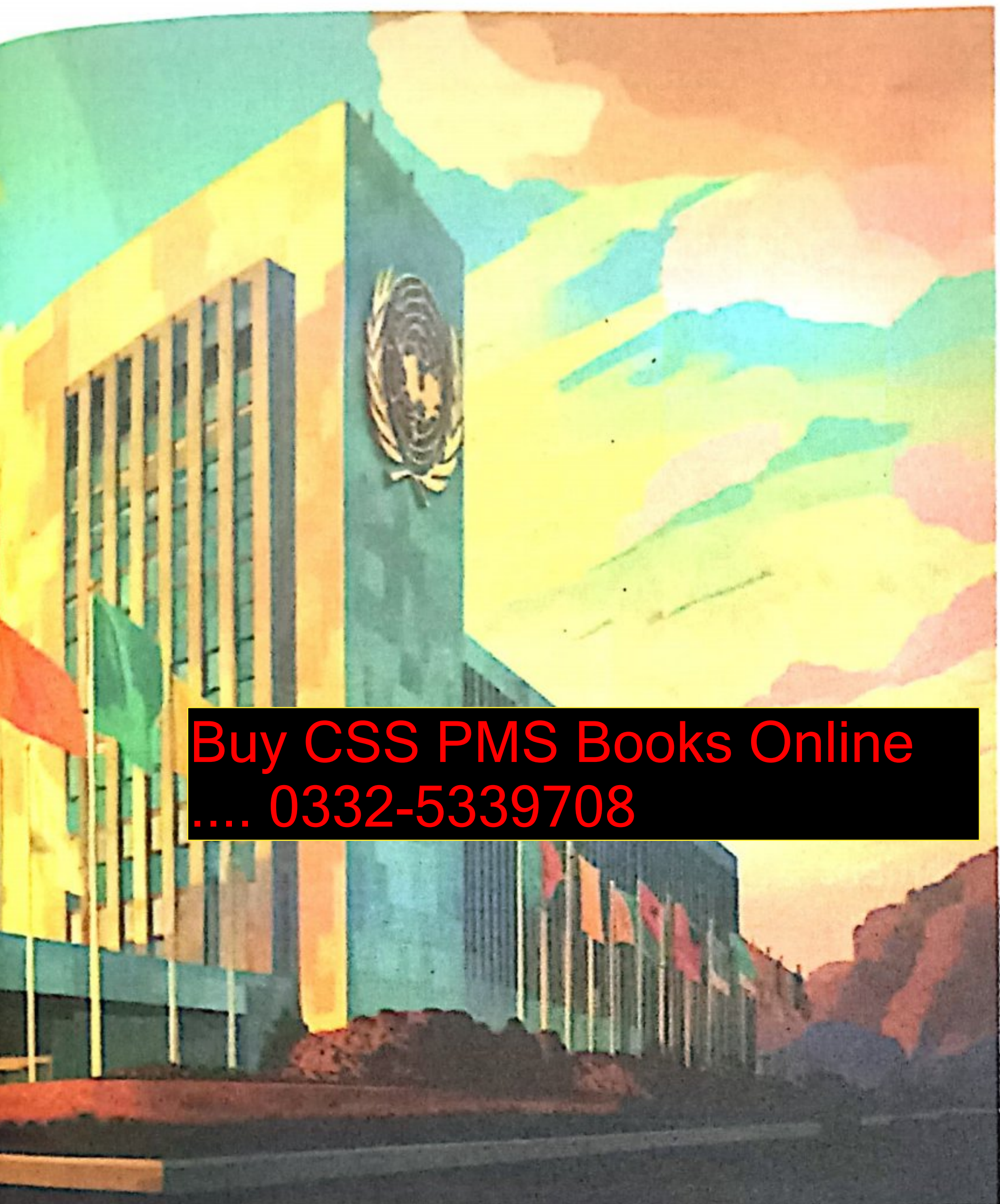


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The Security Council's membership and working methods reflect a bygone era. Though geopolitics has changed drastically, the UNSC has changed relatively little since 1945, when wartime victors crafted a Charter in their interest and awarded "permanent" veto-wielding Council seats for the Allied victors. Today, it still fails to represent many regions of the world, and the increasing frequency of using vetoes is inhibiting its functionality. In recent years, members' competing interests have often stymied the Security Council's ability to respond to major global conflicts and crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's annexation of Crimea and subsequent invasion of Ukraine, and Israel's relentless aggression against the Palestinians.

2. Reforms long overdue

The UNSC was expanded in 1965 when its membership was enhanced from six elected members to ten, and, in 1971, when the People's Republic of China took the permanent seat that was previously occupied by the Republic of China (Taiwan). Since then, the body's composition has remained unchanged. Today, many countries and regional powers such as Brazil, Germany, India, Japan, Nigeria and South Africa are seeking to enlarge the Security Council or secure permanent seats of their own. Many nations have called for France to cede its permanent seat to the European Union in the wake of Brexit, especially after France and Germany decided to share the presidency of the Security Council for two months in 2019. So, although the overall membership of the UN has increased from 113 to 193, there has been no change in the



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composition of the UNSC.

3. Inequitable representation

The continent of Europe only makes up 6.6% of the world's total land area. Nevertheless, they are represented by 60% of the Security Council (three countries are permanent members). Twenty percent and 12 percent of the world's land, respectively, are in Africa and South America, yet neither continent has a 'permanent member' country. The Asian continent has a representation of under 20% despite having more than 60% of the world's population (one country is a permanent member).

Despite the fact that geographic and regional participation is crucial in many UN forums, it is missing in the crucial permanent members of the Security Council. Taking into account the region's position, the population of the continent and the current economic situation, making some nations from Asia, Africa and the South American continent permanent members of the Security Council is now being demanded.

There are many fundamental issues in the discourse over UNSC reform but the most fundamental is this question. Can we allow five permanent members? There is a general consensus that this permanent category is not going to stay. Politically, it is untenable that the five permanent members enjoy their position, and the privilege of a veto over any Council resolution or decision, merely by virtue of having won the position 76 years ago.

4. Crisis of legitimacy and credibility

The stalled reform agenda and various issues, including its interventions in Libya and Syria in the name of responsibility, have raised questions about the credibility of the institution. Some advocates of the Right to Protect (R2P) say the veto gives undue deference to the political

interests of the P5, leading to inaction in the face of mass atrocities. Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini, the UN human rights chief from 2014 to 2018, repeatedly criticized the outsized power of the veto-wielding member states, warning that without institutional change, the United Nations could collapse.

5. North-South divide

The permanent UNSC membership portrays the big North-South divide in the decision-making of security measures. For instance, there is no permanent member from Africa, despite the fact that 75% of its work is focused on this continent.

6. Emerging issues

Issues such as deepening economic interdependence, worsening environmental degradation and transnational threats also call for effective multilateral negotiations among the countries based on consensus. Yet, all critical decisions of the UNSC are still being taken by the permanent members of the Security Council.

Key Areas of Reforms

The UN reform agenda centres around three key areas: development, management and peace and security.

1. Development reform

The 2030 Agenda requires bold changes to the UN development system for the emergence of a new generation of country teams, centred on a strategic UN Development Assistance Framework and led by an impartial, independent and empowered resident coordinator.

2. Management reform

This involves simplifying processes, working toward gender parity, streamlining human resources procedures and generally creating a more efficient organisation.

3. Peace and security reform

This involves restructuring peace and security operations to better meet modern-day challenges.

4. Security Council reforms

The Security Council's permanent members can hardly claim adequate representation of the world's leadership today.

- The UNSC does not include a permanent member from the African, Australian and South American continents, and the pillars of the multilateral order, such as the G-4 group of Brazil, India, Germany, and Japan, have been ignored for long.
- Other, more representative options exist, and that has been the crux of the battle for change.

Feasibility of reforms

Demanding reforms is not beneficial for 'all'

The reform-demanding states perceive that they deserve a place on the Security Council, especially the countries that believe their status in the world ought to be recognized as being in no way inferior to the existing permanent members.

For example, the small countries that make up more than half the UN's membership accept that reality and are content to compete occasionally for a two-year non-permanent seat on the Council.

Difficulties in bringing amendments

Part of the problem is that the bar to amending the UN Charter has been set rather high.

Any amendment requires a two-thirds majority of the overall membership, in other words 129 of the 193 states in the General Assembly, and would further have to be ratified by two-thirds of the member states.

The only possibility that has any chance of passing is that it will either persuade two-thirds of the UN member-states to support it and not attract the opposition of any of the existing permanent five, or even that of a powerful US Senator who could block ratification in Washington.

Replacing the UN System

The organisations and groupings outside the UN, like China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), OECD, Quad, etc. are all ad hoc and tend to serve limited interests rather than universal values.

Some function as clubs (such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union, G-7, G-20, and the World Economic Forum). Others are limited alliances envisaged as maintaining regional security (such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

Without global treaties and legal obligations binding them, they are essentially only as effective as their last summit.

Prospects for reform

The odds of substantial reform are seen as remote because amending the UN Charter requires an affirmative vote and domestic ratification by two-thirds of UN member states. This includes all of the Security Council's permanent members, which are unlikely to take measures that would curb their own influence. While there is broad agreement among UN member states that the Security Council's makeup is outdated, each of the various proposals for reform inevitably leaves some aspirants alienated. Some proposals call for additional permanent members and

others for a new class of elected seats that have the possibility of renewal. In the absence of Charter reform, smaller states have advocated for procedural changes, including greater transparency and closer consultations with troop-contributing countries.

Still, in early 2022, then UN General Assembly President Csaba Kőrösi and US President Joe Biden both said that reforming the Security Council should be an important objective. In his 2023 address to the United Nations, Biden elaborated on his previous calls for reform, urging the expansion of the Security Council, particularly by adding more members from Africa and Latin America.

Conclusion

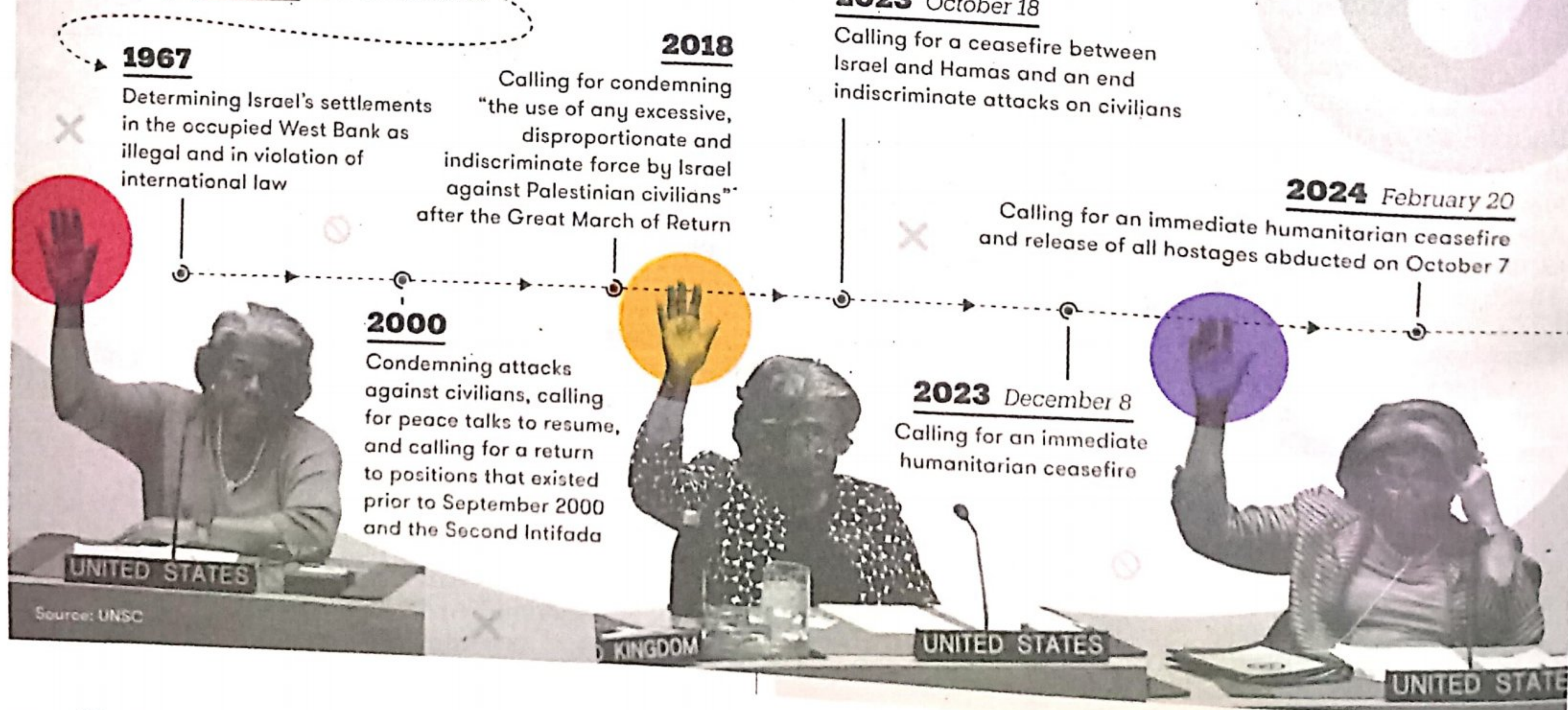
With the world changing quickly, the Council is dangerously falling short of its mandate as the primary custodian for the maintenance of international peace and security. Hence, reforming the Security Council would be a sensible and necessary move to balance geopolitics in the modern era. How will the UN talk about democracy and equal rights in

every country, if there is no representation of global public opinion or equal rights in the largest organisation in the world?

The UN Charter and Security Council need to be reformatted immediately in order to ensure that global peace and security are not compromised in any way, and that no state is denied justice or forced to accept an unjust decision. ■

The writer is an expert on International Law.

36 of the 40 vetoes blocking resolutions on Palestine were cast by the US for decades



THE NEO-COLD WAR

If we had to describe in one word today's geopolitical rivalries, that word would probably be 'neo-Cold War'. The Cold War of the 20th century was essentially a geopolitical confrontation involving the world's leading thalassocracy (a sea-based empire) versus the top continental tellurocracy (a land-based empire). But, in today's neo-Cold War era, global politics revolves around economic muscle and technological advancements. If recent developments in the three major areas, i.e. politics and diplomacy, international trade and economics, and military, in the US are looked at together, there hardly remains a doubt that these are all marked by a strong "neo-Cold War" hue and exhibit a trend of continuity and escalating intensity.

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The Cold War, spanning five decades, marked a pivotal era in global history where a bipolar world order dominated, and nations faced the choice of aligning with either the United States or the Soviet Union. Defined by the clash of ideologies—Communism championed by the USSR and Capitalism and Democracy upheld by the USA—the Cold War saw the Western maritime power of the United States competing with the Eurasian land power of the Soviet Union for global hegemony. This more or less balanced correlation of forces existed until the implosion of the USSR. However, the risk of an apocalyptic Armageddon discouraged the prospect of a direct nuclear exchange between the two superpowers.

The demise of the Cold War brought an ephemeral unipolar configuration. However, the second "twenty years' crisis" has unleashed chaos, anarchy, uncertainty, bloodshed, forever wars and unorthodox forms of conflict. Several regions and states have been engulfed by the tectonic shockwaves of the ensuing turmoil and complex interdependence has fuelled the proliferation of threats related to the prospects of coercion, disruption, subordination and conquest. Under this ominous Zeitgeist, the spectre of strategic competition between status quo and revisionist great powers has been reactivated.

The rise of China

In the last two decades, Beijing has employed the strategy of peaceful economic rise and gained the status of a rising global power in the Eastern Hemisphere. In 2013, President Xi Jinping came to power with a new goal in Beijing's foreign policy as he introduced "Economic Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics". Since then, Beijing has launched many mega-investment projects to engage different countries within and outside the region to achieve its objectives. Most prominent is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This ambitious infrastructure project aimed to connect three densely populated regions of the globe: East Asia, Europe and Africa. A decade later, BRI has extended to Latin America. This initiative has been crucial in broadening Beijing's economic and political influence in the above-mentioned regions.

BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) is another example of China's active participation in global economic and political affairs. In the BRICS summit held in August 2022, the chair declared the agenda of "Global South-South Cooperation".

Similarly, G77 Plus China is another multilateral forum focused on the development and progress of the global south under Chinese leadership. Its summit, held in September last, represented 80% of the world's population and addressed the major concerns of the Global South, including climate change, the global economic system and widening differences over the Russia-Ukraine war. The development of the Asian Infrastructure Bank (AIIB) in 2013 is another rung of this ladder, defining Beijing's commitment to regional development.

Russia's resurgence

During the Cold War era, Soviet influence on global affairs was mired by their internal challenges and external pressures; however, Moscow has resurged as one of the prominent players in the international arena by re-acquiring its decades-old status of great power. Russia, at present, is emerging as a great power with a major shift in its foreign policy, fully focused on the continuously evolving geopolitical and geostrategic environment of the world. The Kremlin's repositioning in global affairs under President Vladimir Putin has led to a geopolitical and geostrategic transformation of its foreign policy. It follows multilateralism with active outreach in different parts of the world. The changing geopolitical realities, growing economic

INTERNATIONAL

interdependencies, and increasing military alliances, especially in South Asia and the Middle East, are vital considerations for Russia in redefining its foreign policy as a great power. In contemporary Russian foreign policy, there are tangible determinants that call for a multipolar world order, including the realignment of foreign relations and the

consolidation of great power status. Russia is, therefore, swiftly emerging as an influential global player in establishing a multipolar world system by engaging regional actors in political, economic and strategic domains.

The Russia-China duo

The growing relationship between Russia and China is based

Pivotal Events that Shaped Contours of the Current International System, 1991-2023





on strong economic, political and military ties, despite external pressure, especially from the USA. Both countries defy the anticipated notion of a unitary West. This strategic partnership is expected to circumvent US sanctions against Russia and trade wars with China. Both countries are working together to enhance their economic and strategic cooperation and maintain stability in the region. They share similar views on the geopolitical situation in the Middle East, the Catch-22 situation in the Asia Pacific, and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Then, just before Russia invaded Ukraine, Putin went to Beijing, and the countries issued a joint declaration that had an ideological underpinning for the first time in recent memory. It talked about opposing an American conception of world order. For many, the Cold War comparisons were revived when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, especially because they feared that the world may become much more chaotic as new centers of power try to redefine the world in a way that suits their interests.

American response

The United States, a relatively more mature player in the global political game, has launched many initiatives to counter China and Russia. For example, G7, an informal grouping of industrialized democracies of the USA, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the UK, has been putting unprecedented sanctions on Russia and approving hefty aid packages for Ukraine. Build Back Better World (B3W) was launched after the G7 summit in 2021. AUKUS and Quad are other examples of US-led strategic partnerships in the contemporary era. AUKUS consists of Australia, the UK and the USA and aims to maintain deterrence and showcase defense capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, countering China's influence in the region. Ridiculously, it is known as the "Asia Pacific NATO Replica".

The quadrilateral security group QUAD consists of the USA, Australia, India and Japan. The major objective was cooperation in the maritime domain. In 2021, American President Joe Biden convened a virtual session attended by the counterparts of member countries, addressing the Covid-19 vaccination process, climate change, and technological innovations.

The three fronts of war

Given this state of affairs, in today's increasingly multipolar international system, there are three major fronts in which the global balance of power may be reshuffled in the foreseeable future. In each of them, the remnants of unipolar overstretch are being contested by assertive states, especially China and Russia.

1. Eastern Europe and the Post-Soviet Space

From Russian perspective, the dismemberment of the former Yugoslavia, the eastward expansion of NATO and the outbreak of "colour revolutions" - orchestrated by Washington and Brussels as regime change operations in pivotal post-Soviet states - are deeply aggressive moves

which endangered Russian national security. Russia's earlier expectations to join the collective West as a senior partner were shattered by reality. As the perception of encirclement grew, Russia felt the need to push back. The Russian attempt to turn the tide is reflected in the use of military force—in places like Georgia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine—but it also involves ingredients such as nuclear saber-rattling and hybrid warfare. Russia's versatile arsenal also includes the esoteric tradecraft of clandestine operations, the weaponization of energy supplies, infiltration, cyberattacks, asymmetric force multipliers and innovative agitprop tactics. Furthermore, Russia also intends to position itself as a civilizational and ideological pole whose values, traditions and worldviews do not mirror the post-modern cosmopolitan doctrines preached in Washington, Brussels and Davos.

In this context, the invasion of Ukraine was a dangerous act. For the Americans, the invasion offered an opportunity to weaken Russian strength without a direct military commitment. Facts on the ground and the balance of resolve suggest that Russia seems determined to prevail in what regards as an existential conflict, even if that comes with high costs and risks. Russia has even managed to deflect and overcome the impact of Western punitive economic sanctions. Nonetheless, even if the outcome of the attritional conflict is somehow favourable for Moscow, asymmetric strategic competition is unlikely to recede. Russians will do everything in their power to decouple European states from NATO's gravitational pull in order to diminish the American strategic grip on the European rimland. Moscow has crossed the Rubicon and the die has been cast.

The Greater Middle East

The overthrow of nationalist Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in the early Cold War by the CIA-generated substantial popular resentment made Iran operate, along with Turkey and Israel, as a vector of American influence in the region and strategic counterweight against the Arab states supported by the Soviets. Yet, the sudden eruption of the Islamic Revolution was a game-changer. The new regime was seen as an unpredictable wild card that fuelled strategic anxieties in neighbouring states and beyond. The Americans armed both sides in the Iran-Iraq war with the expectation that they would bleed each other dry. In a nutshell, there are scores waiting to be settled between Washington and Tehran.

On the other hand, the US military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq provided a valuable opportunity worth harnessing by Tehran in pursuit of regional hegemony. The ensuing chaos turned out to be a ladder for Iran to extend the threshold of its footprint under conditions shaped by sectarian carnage and multiple power voids. Ever since, the Iranians have invested many resources in the development of a 'Shiite Crescent' as a geopolitical project under Tehran's suzerainty. For all intents and purposes, this scheme has been progressing. Thanks to the strategic tutelage of like-minded nonstate actors (e.g. Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis); partnerships with local allies (e.g. Alawites in Syria); the threat to block maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz; and the irregular warfare know-how of the Quds force, Iranian influence is felt in the Levant, Mesopotamia, the Arabian Peninsula, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. Iran has managed to threaten Saudi Arabia and Israel—both of which are firmly in the orbit of Washington's foreign policy agenda—hit US targets in the region and fuel popular unrest. The Iranians have mastered the art of playing with fire without getting burned themselves. Interestingly, this bid for regional hegemony has been justified through ideological claims inspired by 'anti-imperialist resistance' and the banner of Shiite messianic fervor.

However, the Iranian regime has encountered a fierce backlash from Washington, Jerusalem, Riyadh and even Sunni jihadist forces like the so-called "Islamic State." So far, a direct military clash has not occurred, but the ominous specter of war is haunting the entire region as the overarching fallout of the Israel-Hamas War spreads like wildfire. As a result of its unwavering support for Israel, the military and political blowback of these hostilities is already dragging the US into the fight as a co-belligerent. This low-intensity conflict is escalating and, if its chain reaction spirals out of control, it can ignite an actual kinetic war.

The heavy-handed Israeli retaliatory campaign against Hamas and its resonance throughout the Muslim Arab world offers yet another opportunity for Tehran to further its interests, as well as to sow discord as a way to weaken its enemies.

3. The Indo-Pacific

General Karl Haushofer prophesied that the Indo-Pacific oceanic Grossraum had the potential to become one of the world's major centers of geopolitical gravity in the long run. The fulfilment of this prospect did not seem likely after the crushing defeat of Imperial Japan in World War II. However, the prediction of an 'Asian Century' is materializing incrementally. During the Cold War, military conflicts were fought in the Korean peninsula and Southeast Asia. In turn, the Americans established a strong presence in strategic locations throughout the Asian rimland, including Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand. The balance of power also changed after the Sino-Soviet split and the subsequent realignment of Beijing towards the US, engineered by Henry Kissinger and Zhou Enlai. Furthermore, the meteoric rise of late industrialization in various Asian economies raised the region's strategic profile. In the span of a generation, China — through a model of state-led capitalism — achieved a degree of economic development that upgraded its national power in the fields of advanced industries, technological innovation, trade, finance and monetary affairs. The results are impressive. China has the world's second largest GDP and the world's largest foreign exchange reserves. Last but not least, the growing internationalization of the Chinese yuan as a minor reserve currency is also a sign of increasing influence and wealth. Deng's remarks about the gloriousness of being a rich nation have been validated by reality.

In contrast to the limits of Russia and Iran as aspiring behemoths, China already has the ability to operate as a full-spectrum peer competitor of the United States. However, what China seeks at the moment is not global hegemony, but regional hegemony in Asia in a way similar to the efforts of the US to position itself as the dominant power in the American hemisphere in the era of the Monroe Doctrine.

Although China is acting as a revisionist power, it does not intend to rely on military force to overturn the existing status quo. After all, classical Chinese strategic thinking praises the wisdom of winning without fighting. Beijing's promise that its rise will be peaceful does not mean that it will be frictionless or harmonious, only that it prefers a trajectory in which hard power is not required in its 'long march' towards superpower status.

With the promise of profitable business opportunities, development, investment, credit and trade, China intends to absorb markets rather than to conquer colonies. Cash is king, not just as money, but also as political instrument that

serves the national interest. This is the context in which the creation of multilateral projects headed by China — like the Belt and Road Initiative, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnerships — must be understood. Beijing is laying the groundwork for the development of a parallel system of international economic governance beyond the control of Western powers. What Chinese authorities envisage for the consolidation of a regional order is a Greater Eurasia Co-Prosperity Sphere with itself as the first among equals. Still, Beijing is strengthening its military capabilities in case preparedness is needed for a confrontation. This upgrade contemplates the development of a blue-water navy to counter the Americans' ability to restrict China's access to international waterways. In a zero-sum international system, the rise of China motivates strategic anxieties in both Washington and several regional capitals. Unsurprisingly, existing coalitions — like the Five Eyes — are being repurposed and new ones are being built — AUKUS, the Quad — in order to contain China's conventional and unconventional quest for Lebensraum in Asia. So far, conflict has not surfaced in Asia because no red line has been crossed yet. Nevertheless, tensions remain high and the co-existence of many players with incompatible interests is problematic for regional stability. Together, trends like North Korean military muscle-flexing, the remilitarization of Japan, a simmering trade war between the USA and China, changing regional geopolitical alignments, the threat of militancy in Central Asia, the

contentious status of Taiwan and Beijing's maritime disputes with Manila and Tokyo over the control of insular positions point in a troublesome direction. Under these conditions, the prospective clash between China as a rising challenger and the US as a declining and beleaguered hegemon is exceedingly dangerous.

Conclusion

The world is witnessing a neo-Cold War fought in a multipolar environment. The outcome remains unclear. The present strategic competition is volatile not just because of the plurality of players, but also because the specters of conventional warfare, nuclear threats and the use of non-military vectors of power projection are interwoven. Furthermore, although focused mostly on the Eurasian landmass, this dispute transcends the territorial horizon of its original epicenters. For instance, Chinese mercantile projection is strong in Latin America and Russia has gained multiple beachheads in Africa. In other words, these rivalries are being echoed in secondary battlespaces. In addition, there are certain overlaps. An interesting implication of this geopolitical turbulence is that it will provide strategic distractions and opportunities so that middle powers — such as Brazil, India Mexico, South Africa, Turkey — can act in an increasingly self-confident way without having to take sides.

The writing on the wall warns that the combination of three parallel strategic collisions might bring disastrous results. In the meantime, the temperature is rising, and a critical boiling point will be reached sooner rather than later unless sober diplomatic deals are made as guarantees that protracted rivalries will be managed so that systemic strategic stability does not collapse. ■

The writer is a member of staff.



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Can Washington establish an alternative to NATO in the region?

When assessing the prevailing strategy of the United States, particularly concerning Asia and the Indo-Pacific, one must consider the present and future feasibility and potential courses of action for NATO within the geopolitical space of those regions. Will the US establish a NATO derivative to address the ascent of China and the assertiveness of Russia?

The response to these questions may yield various potential scenarios. It would be premature to conclusively assert that the US has no intentions of extending its influence or fully committing to the Asia-Pacific region in the immediate future. This ambiguity may stem from the current priorities and engagements of US foreign policy, notably in significant global events such as the Ukraine-Russia conflict in Eastern Eurasia and the Palestine-Israel issue in the Middle East. Nonetheless, it appears increasingly evident that, sooner or later, the US will need to leverage its full spectrum of soft, smart and hard power assets to formulate a balanced or potentially unipolar collective security framework aimed at addressing or negotiating with competitors such as China in the region.

During the Cold War, the US and its allies established military and security alliances in the Asia and Middle East regions reminiscent of the NATO. These included the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), which served as security and defense bulwarks for the US and its Western allies to safeguard their global interests and protect member countries from Soviet aggression and subversion. However, as times have changed, so too have interests. Yet, some argue that the underlying purpose of the US remains consistent, akin to "old wine in a new bottle." While the strategy may be aimed at addressing new competitors, the overarching strategic objective remains unchanged. In contemporary global politics, entities like SEATO or CENTO may no longer directly serve US interests, but they hold considerable influence in shaping new strategic shifts within the region.

New US strategic offshoots in Asia-Pacific region

In the realm of international politics, especially concerning the establishment of robust and enduring global cooperation, two prevailing concepts that hold significant sway are community-building and order-establishment. Since 2013, particularly following China's ambitious

US vs. CHINA

in the Indo-Pacific

Dawood Khan Abbasi

endeavours such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the US has found it useful to reassess its collaborative and strategic avenues within the region. Amidst a plethora of initiatives, certain endeavours undertaken by the US exhibit a strategic orientation towards partnership. Examples include the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS), which emphasizes security-focused collaboration; the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), a trilateral security partnership involving Australia, the UK, and the US (AUKUS); and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), which embodies an economic strategic engagement.

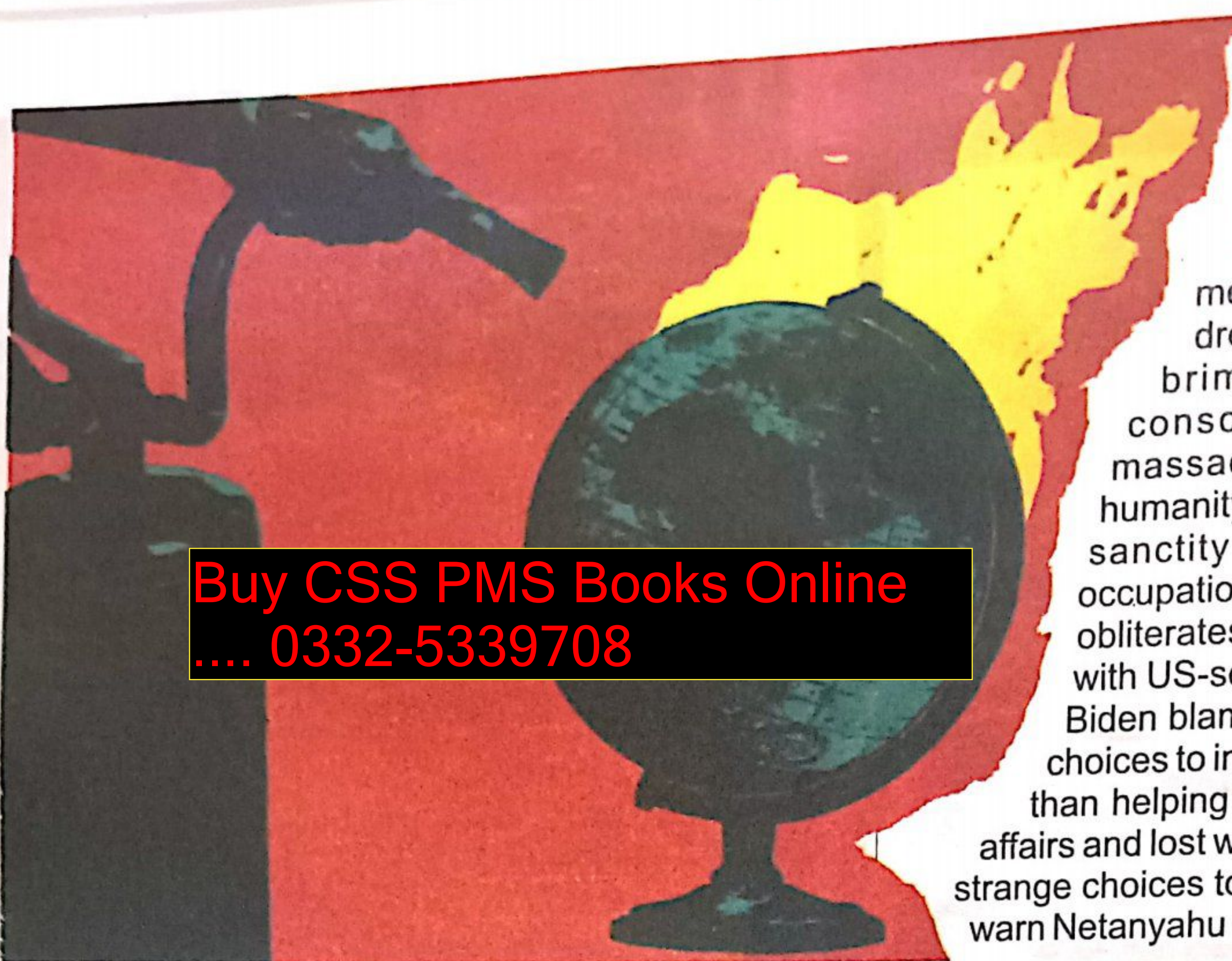
Understanding these initiatives is crucial for observing the US' current strategic objectives and options in the region.

Indeed, the majority of the current policies pursued by the US appear to be more reactive than reflective of a proactive strategic shift. This suggests that instead of formulating long-term policy objectives, the US' actions are often driven by short-term developments, frequently instigated by regional competitors in the Asia-Pacific region.

The need for states to create their own strategies

This reactive approach represents a loophole in the US's broader strategic interests in the region, as it can lead to confusion among allies. Many of the US' regional allies are now inclined to develop their own independent strategies rather than relying solely on US guidance. While they still seek support from the US, they recognize the necessity of establishing their own strategic frameworks in today's multipolar, multifaceted world. Recent trends indicate that several US allies have begun to prioritize their own strategic agendas. For instance, France has developed its Indo-Pacific strategy, while Germany has forged its own strategic partnerships in the region. Even traditional US partners such as India, Japan, and, to some extent, Australia are pursuing their strategic objectives to secure their positions in the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions. It can be inferred that, following the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, there may be a perceived decline in US influence in the region. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the US remains the predominant hegemonic power with extensive knowledge and involvement in the region. While US policy often reacts to its main counterpart, China, it remains a pivotal player in matters of security, economics, diplomacy and politics within Asia-Pacific nations. Consequently, countries in the region, regardless of their size, find themselves compelled to engage with the US due to their short-term goals and dependencies. Analysts expect this dynamic to persist for at least the next three or four decades. Furthermore, interpreting the US power shift solely through the lens of emerging powers in the Asia-Pacific region would be a misjudgment, as the US retains the capability to forge security alliances akin to NATO. ■

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More than five months have passed, and the US-supported Israeli violence in, and bombardment of, Gaza still unfolds prodigious lies of terror that have redefined and reshaped the so-called Western political hegemonic mental microscope of power, exposing the dreadful apparatus of moral and intellectual brimstone and the failure of human consciousness to see planned human massacres, genocide and crimes against humanity. The tyranny of reason ignores the sanctity of human life and the continued occupation of Palestine and is implied while Israel obliterates the entire civilian population of Gaza with US-sent bombs and war machines. President Biden blames PM Netanyahu for making irrational choices to invade Rafah that are 'hurting Israel' more than helping its cause. America is isolated in global affairs and lost when it comes to the shrouded mystery of strange choices to support Israel for the wrong actions or warn Netanyahu of the 'red lines'.

The War on GAZA and The End of



Multiplied consequential threats to global security and peace, the Western leaders – the so-called proponents of international peace, security and human rights – turned out to be wicked spectators who mock human understanding of the catastrophic and painful sufferings endured by the 2.9 million civilian people of Gaza. The US supplied all the weapons to Israel without any accountability to international law, Geneva Conventions, and the UNO-mandated protection of civilians in conflict zones. Chris Hedges and Peter Koenig write:

"... The horror is of blood and shredded children... tens of thousands — maybe hundreds of thousands — dead bodies disintegrating in the rubbles of indiscriminately IDF-bombed hospitals, apartment buildings, mosques — you name it."

Kamala Harris, the US Vice President, comes out of the political void to call for 'an immediate ceasefire', not part of the usual American agenda. PM Netanyahu and his war cabinet look paranoid, vengeful egomaniacs and politically ruptured as the masses in Israel demonstrate daily, demanding a ceasefire and return of 134 hostages and new elections. The al-Jazeera "October 7" investigation reports 27 Israeli citizen hostages were killed by their own gun helicopters. The US-Israel convergence of humanitarian airdrops is an analogy of absurdity and contradictions, explains Dr. Paul Lardue in "Gaza Airdrops: Propaganda and

Western Moral and Political Hegemony

Dr Mahboob A Khawaja, PhD

Possibilities":

"... Israel can appear to be less heartless than its genocidal practices would otherwise suggest, and similar PR applies to the other participants that are collaborating with the genocide ... Of course, Israel also agrees to the airdrops because they exercise control over them."

Western imperialism controls the puppet Arab-Muslim leaders

The Arab-Muslim world is a dead-ended entity of ritual flurries on the crisis without formal burials and no public institutions of reasoned thought, action and responsibility. There are no customary Arab armies or leaders capable of defending the Palestinian cause or the interests of Islam. The OIC, Saudi Arabia and the Arab League are symbolic configurations without any capacity – an insult to common sense. The Arab Middle East is a static region of fake oil-based economic prosperity and uncertainty being governed by former neo-colonial tribal agents installed by the Europeans as kings, presidents, emirs and princes, living in palaces, not with people. Was the discovery of "oil" an obsession – a stigma, a conspiracy ("fitna") to forfeit Arab culture and Islamic civilization?

The Arab-Muslim leaders mark achievements of a friendly relationship with Israel, while Israeli-American policies are aimed at rebuking the rights and freedom of Palestine and the joke of a 'two-state solution.' Western mythologists view the oil-exporting

Arab leaders as "camel jockeys" and brainless figures. Their palaces are protected by American and European mercenaries, preoccupied with erecting high-rise buildings, organizing football and Olympic games and COP28, while 2.9 million are being bombed and more than 30,000 are massacred across Gaza; some 13,000 innocent children and more than 8,000 women are killed and 70,000 people injured. The daily Israeli carnage and killings in the West Bank and new settlements are constant reminders of violations of international law written on paper since 1948. Do the Arab-Muslim leaders breathe oxygen into a delusional fantasy? One wonders if the "America-Israel War on Gaza is a Prelude to the Conquest of the Arab World".

The earth is a living trust; those bombing it are not normal human beings

Earth is living - a trust to mankind. It rotates itself at a speed of 1000 miles per hour (mph) at the equator and orbits the Sun at an average speed of 67062 mph. It is perfectly balanced by the divine order for human survival and progress. All praises are to God, the Creator of the Heavens and Earth Who has balanced it just for human living, solidarity and progress. Wherever there is trust, there is accountability. The so-called Western official humanity succumbs to the mysterious ideal of democracy and primitive discourse to face the compelling reality. "Fear God" and 'do not violate the covenants of peace and trust on Earth.' The Divine Message (3:190: The Quran) clarifies:

Verily, in the creation of the Heavens and of the Earth and in the succession of the night and of the day, are signs for men of understanding; who standing and sitting and reclining, bear God in mind and reflect on the creation of the Heavens and of Earth and say: Oh, our Lord Thou has not created this in vain.

Those doing the bombing are causing catastrophic destruction of life and Earth are not normal human beings. The followers of Moses - the generations of Israelites—are reminded by God (Quran 2: 84-85):

And remember, We took a Covenant from the Children of Israel (progeny of Jacob), Worship none but God; shed no blood amongst you, Nor displace people from homes: and Ye solemnly ratified..... And on the Day of Judgment they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty; For God is not unmindful what ye do.

And the killing of innocent people is prohibited in the Ten Commandments (Torah): 'Thou shalt not kill' (Exod. 20:13; also Deut. 5:17).

Jewish law views the shedding of innocent blood very seriously and lists murder as one of three sins (along with idolatry and sexual immorality) that fall under the category of *yehareg ve'al ya'avur* - meaning "one should let himself be killed rather than violate it." According to Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, 'Jewish law forbids the killing of innocent people, even in the course of a legitimate military engagement.'

Is the fallacy of the civilized Western world coming to an end on its own?

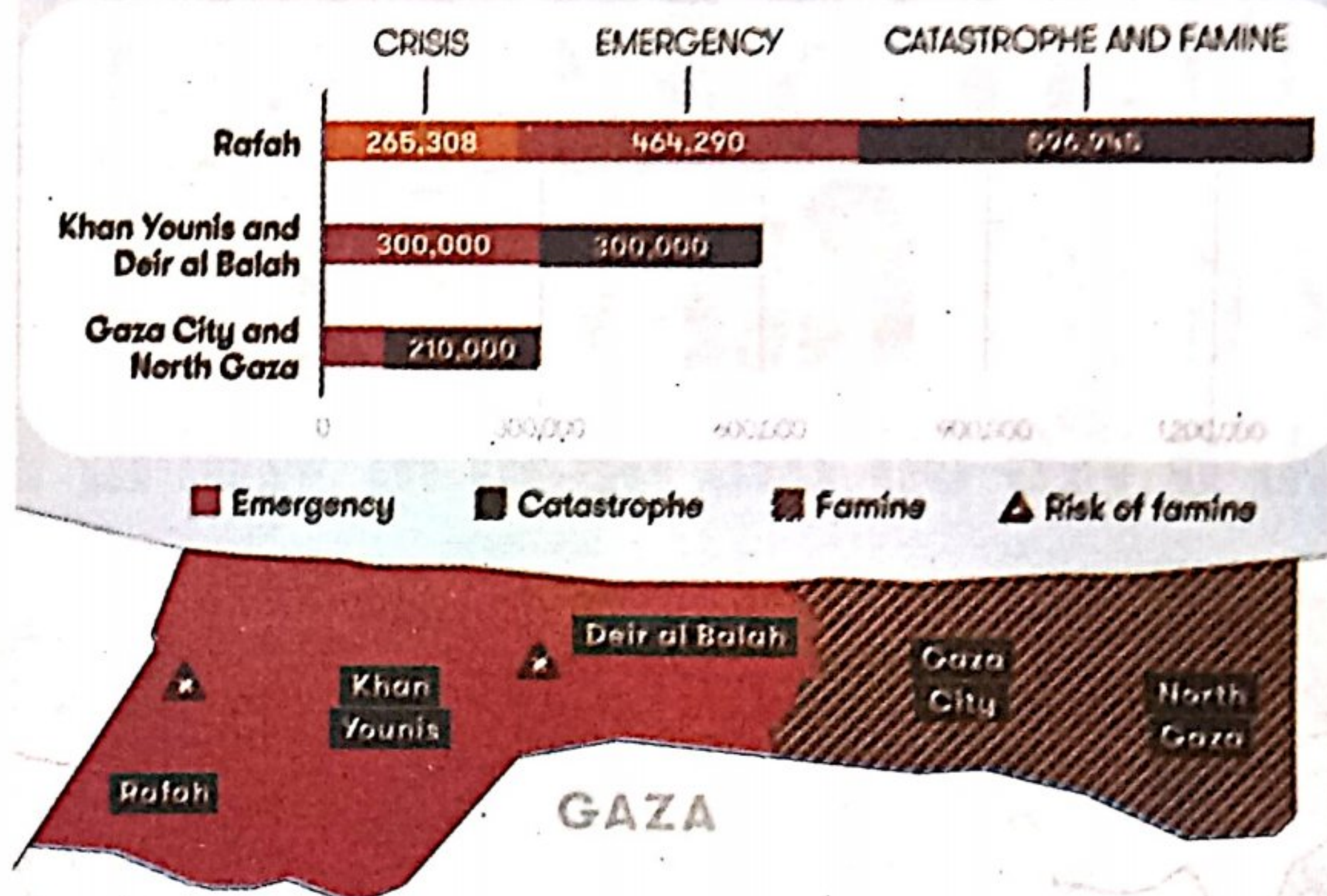
The global institutions and systems of democratic governance and all of their formal moral, intellectual and political proclamations appear defunct when it comes to dealing with Israel and the US war against humanity. There is a complete disconnect between moral and humanitarian values and the present and future survival and progress of civilized mankind. Media reports indicate

several hundred Western European and American troops fighting in support of Israel. What a shame and what a disgrace that Arab-Muslim leaders would not act to defend the human dignity, security and freedom of the people of Gaza.

The American-Israeli collaborative war on Gaza and its immediate consequences made the Western world and all of its institutions shamefully redundant in the 21st-century global norms of civility, human rights, freedom, justice and safety of civilians - whereas crimes against humanity are captured in obscure impulses, indecision and deliberate inaction by the UNO and the Security Council. Mocking its Charter's obligations, the UN Security Council failed to agree to an immediate ceasefire or to protect civilians from the terror of daily bombardments of hospitals, doctors, ambulances, schools and places of worship. The five-month continued

FAMINE IS IMMINENT IN GAZA

Projected food insecurity (March 16-July 16)



onslaught sounds like 500 years of prolonged insanity that mankind has never witnessed except the two World Wars. While political cynicism and wickedness across the Western hemisphere are endemic, the need to end the war calls for an urgent, reasoned dialogue for peace. The animals have no bombs, guns or bullets to kill each other and do not reflect on the imperatives of life. We the human beings are supposed to be an intelligent and responsible species on this Earth. At the edge of reason, the notion of evil leads to the realization that the evil and tyranny of war must be stopped by all means, and those responsible for bombing innocents, and committing genocide and crimes against humanity must be held accountable to restore the vision of a sustainable moral and intellectual humanity. ■

Dr. Mahboob A. Khawaja specializes in international affairs-global security, peace and conflict resolution with keen interests in Islamic-Western comparative cultures and civilizations and is the author of several publications, including the latest: One Humanity and the Remaking of Global Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution. Germany.

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NATO Expansion and Russia-Ukraine War

Are We on the Cusp of World War Three?

Aftab H. Wahla



On March 7, 2024, Sweden submitted its Instrument of Accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with the Government of the United States in Washington DC, becoming the 32nd member of this defence alliance. Similarly, three more

NATO partner countries - Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine - have also formally declared their aspiration to join NATO. The expansion of this military alliance, often touted as the world's most formidable, right to the border with Russia has some serious repercussions for global security. The situation is becoming so grave that the UK Secretary for Defense, Grant Shapps, had to warn that the world will be engulfed by wars involving Russia, Iran, North Korea and China in the next five years. There are also talks about the "pre-war generation," implying that the current generation is living under the gathering clouds of World War III. Multiple recent developments indicate that the West's cold war with Russia and China is turning hot. This growing war hysteria surrounding NATO expansion and the decreasing nuclear threshold warrants a closer examination to better understand the fast-evolving geopolitical landscape of this "uni-multipolar" world.

Let's start with a brief history of NATO and the various phases of its expansion.

NATO was formally established on April 4, 1949 - with 12 founding members - on the principle of collective security, meaning thereby that an attack on one member would be considered an attack on all, and would prompt a

collective response under Article 5. Growing threats emanating from expanding USSR influence, reinforced by the Long Telegraph by George Kennan (a US diplomat based in Moscow), provided stimulus for the formulation of this trans-Atlantic alliance. For instance, the establishment of pro-Kremlin governments in eastern countries, termed famously the 'Iron Curtain' by Winston Churchill, the Berlin Blockade and a coup in Czechoslovakia that resulted in the toppling of a democratic regime, were some incidents that convinced the US-led Western democracies that the USSR was attempting to spread its ideology, i.e. Communism. Naturally, the sole objective of NATO, notwithstanding the liberalistic claims of protecting individual freedoms, the rule of law, democracy and human rights, was to ensure collective defence against the Soviet Union. It was a manifestation of the US policy of containment, and NATO did play a role in deterring the possible expansionist and revisionist agenda of the Kremlin during the Cold War.

NATO underwent expansion during different phases. This expansion was designed strategically to encircle the Soviet Union and deter communist political and military forces from establishing pro-Kremlin regimes. In line with the Truman Doctrine of 1947, which stated US policy goals to help countries ward off threats from armed communist guerrilla forces, Greece and Turkey (now Türkiye) were permitted to join NATO in 1952. Three years later, West Germany became a NATO member, prompting the USSR to announce a counter-military

INTERNATIONAL

alliance, the Warsaw Pact, thereby further widening the division between the Western and Soviet blocs. Spain was also allowed to join in 1982. The collapse of the USSR was a major turning point in the history of this military alliance.

The end of the communist threat after the end of the Cold War and the liberation of 15 ex-Soviet republics, including Russia, made NATO a vestige of the Cold War. Many analysts argued that NATO had lost its *raison d'être* and should not exist any longer. But due to the rise of global terrorism, the Bill Clinton administration not only continued funding the alliance but also approved its expansion, adding Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in 1999. This was the first of several waves of NATO's expansion in the post-Cold War era.

The second major expansion took place when seven old Warsaw Pact countries, including the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, were admitted to NATO despite fierce opposition from the Russian government. The next round of expansion came in 2009, when the Adriatic states of Albania and Croatia became NATO members. Recently, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Finland and, most recently, Sweden joined the bloc.

The expansion of NATO has created serious security

lukewarm response to attempts at expansion, the provocative enlargement involving Baltic states proved too much. Putin, under whose watch Russia has turned more aggressive and assertive, sees NATO's expansion as provocative, as it is now embracing into its folds those countries that were once part of the USSR and even the Russian Empire during Tsarist times. Putin has now opted to act aggressively so as to deter NATO from expanding and becoming able to sit on the borders of the Russian Federation. In his 2014 memoir, Robert Gates, former Secretary of Defence under George W. Bush and Barack Obama, conceded that "trying to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO was truly overreaching." That initiative, he concluded, was a case of "recklessly ignoring what the Russians considered their own vital national interests."

Resultantly, Putin ordered an attack on Georgia in 2008, toppling the pro-Western government, detaching two pro-Russian regions and putting them under direct and effective Russian control. Similarly, when President Obama started meddling in the internal politics of Ukraine (2013-14), Putin responded aggressively, annexing Crimea and establishing control over the Russian-speaking Donetsk and Luhansk regions in

eastern Ukraine. Right before starting a full invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Putin demanded some security assurances, such as guarantees that NATO would reduce the scope of its military presence in Eastern Europe and that NATO membership would not be offered to Ukraine. Both Washington and Brussels spurned these demands, prompting Putin to escalate conflict and launch the first inter-state war on European soil since World War II.

Ever since Russia's launch of the "Special Military Operation" in

Ukraine, the threat of WWII is looming large. Many security and political analysts are now concerned about the growing divide between the West and the Russia-China-Iran-North Korea nexus. The biggest instigation for a large-scale war has come in the form of Sweden's joining NATO. Sweden, which has long maintained a nonaligned status militarily, has opted to join NATO and gain collective defence under Article 5 of the NATO treaty after Putin ordered to roll tanks on Ukrainian soil. Now that both Finland and Sweden have joined the alliance, it would strengthen NATO in the north. According to a recent Washington Post report, Russia maintains much of its second-strike nuclear capability there, and it has also deployed traditional military assets there to keep an eye on the Baltic states. Now that Sweden's Navy, having vast experience operating in and under the Baltic Sea, is at the disposal of Brussels and it would certainly enable NATO to supply or defend its Baltic allies should the need arise in the future. In addition, this expansion has increased the counter-force strike capabilities of Brussels, putting nuclear deterrence under strain and creating a nuclear security dilemma for the Kremlin. This could end up lowering the threshold because the Russian nuclear doctrine doesn't adhere to the No First Use (NFU) policy; it



concerns for Russia, a country that, over the past 30 years, has increasingly been isolated from Europe. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Russia-dominated USSR included all Baltic states and Ukraine, as well as many satellite states, such as Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and more. As of March 2024, all Baltic states, former Warsaw Pact states and even Sweden and Finland – the countries that have long proclaimed neutrality – are now part of NATO. The latest map of the region suggests that Russia is almost encircled on its western side. The eastward expansion of NATO has led to a situation where Russian borders from southwest to northwest are now facing NATO troops directly. Naturally, this has caused great consternation among the Russian military leadership, including Putin himself. Over the years, Russia has responded to this largely needless provocation with increasing intensity, starting with diplomatic opposition in the 1990s and moving to direct military confrontation in the 2010s and 2020s.

Although earlier rounds of NATO's expansion took place when Russia was struggling with economic uncertainties and political turmoil due to the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, those elicited strong opposition and anger from the Russian Federation. Even though Putin showed a

states that any overwhelming strike, conventional or non-conventional, would elicit a nuclear response from Moscow. Therefore, this round of NATO enlargement has the potential to seriously undermine nuclear deterrence, a key bulwark against the outbreak of nuclear Armageddon.

Apart from these threats, the increased probability of a direct NATO-Russian confrontation on Ukrainian soil is another worrisome indication that we are on the cusp of a Third World War. The Ukraine-Russia war, which has entered its third year, has triggered the deepest crisis in Moscow-West relations since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The war has shaken the geopolitical foundation of Europe and caused a structural overhaul and security reassessment of the trans-Atlantic treaty. Even though

Nato's European expansion since 1949

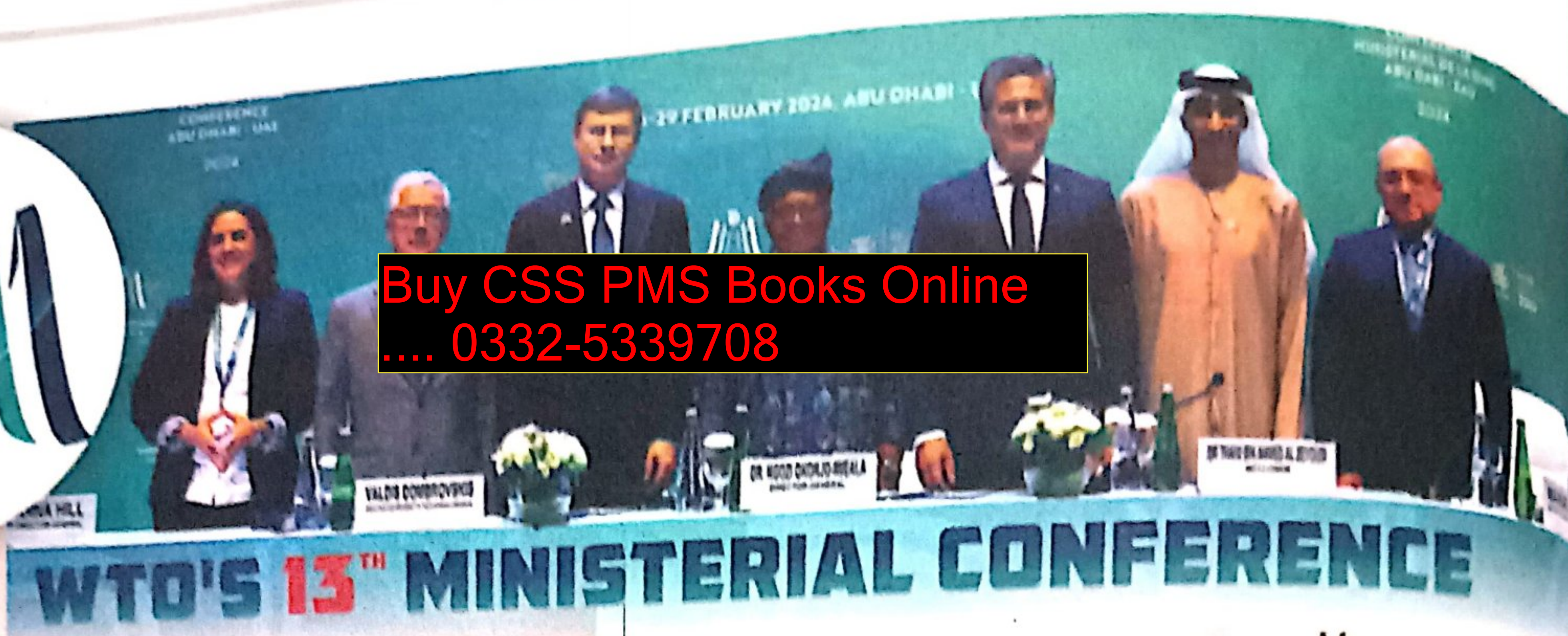


Ukraine has managed to get massive foreign aid, reaching a whopping \$278 billion, including \$75 billion from the United States, the war is in a state of deadlock. The much-touted Ukraine counteroffensive has failed to break the stalemate, and Russia has effectively captured four regions, encompassing 18% of the total area of Ukraine. The continuing war fatigue and the fear that Trump's triumph in the 2024 presidential election would dry up US aid have started ringing alarm bells in European capitals. In this background, there was a discussion of sending NATO troops to Ukraine for training and offensive operations. Putin took exception to these talks and suggestions, and categorically stated that Russia is prepared technically and militarily in case Europe decides to deploy NATO troops in Ukraine. Putin's warning of using weapons that can hit targets on European territories and the possibility of a nuclear confrontation came against French President Macron's statement that the deployment of European troops to

Ukraine could not be ruled out. Putin, in his annual national address, upped the ante, terming such deployments within the striking range of Russian weapons as interventionist moves that could prompt a robust and even nuclear response from the Kremlin. Although the USSR has a long history of using menacing diatribes to scare opponents - from Stalin to Khrushchev, Moscow has always shown its nuclear teeth in confrontation with Europe and the USA - the situation is altogether different now. Putin, who suffered reputational damage as a result of the Wagner rebellion, is in desperate need of some battlefield victories. He knows very well that the Kremlin's military-industrial potential is exhausted now, and it cannot support an all-out confrontation with NATO. Therefore, if NATO troops mobilize to support Ukraine, he will have no choice but to deploy overwhelming power, which could lead to a full-fledged nuclear exchange and the involvement of other powers.

In conclusion, there is no denying that we are living in a perilous situation. The hotspots across the world are hotter now, the fault lines are tense and widening, and war is proliferating in many parts of the world. If we compare these localized conflicts to months before the outbreak of World War One, we can conclude that any miscalculation, misunderstanding or accident can turn these localized conflicts into a chain reaction involving other states and turning into global conflagration. The deepening crisis in the Middle East has morphed into a regional conflagration, flaring into the oil heartlands of the Persian Gulf and disrupting the global economy. Similarly, the increasingly aggressive stance of China regarding the reunification of Taiwan is also emerging as another hotspot with the potential to create debilitating consequences for global security. Above all, the situation in Eastern Europe has certainly raised alarm bells, and countries have started to take nuclear risks seriously, indicating that we are undoubtedly stumbling into nuclear Armageddon. Though Russia bears primary responsibility for undermining the norm of not using war as an instrument of foreign policy, the West, particularly NATO and the USA, should also be held responsible for causing the lethal blow to this norm that has been the basis of the post-World War II era. But we still have time to avoid this doomsday. The USA and NATO must take the initiative to de-escalate the Ukraine-Russia conflict and address the legitimate security concerns of the Kremlin. The immediate cessation of the expansion of NATO should be the first step. Russian people have always regarded themselves as surrounding people and sought a bulwark of friendly or compliant states as a buffer. Therefore, if the West desires sustainable peace and security and the continuation of post-World War II order, it must assure all states that their territorial integrity and economic independence will remain a paramount priority. The world should be extremely careful, as any act of miscalculation could end up blowing up the entire human civilization. In the words of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, "If things go wrong, they can go horribly wrong." This warning should be addressed with the utmost sense of seriousness. ■

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Munazza Khan

Negotiators taking part in the conference ended their summit after failing to reach agreements on several major initiatives, the latest sign of turmoil within the global body. The closing ceremony was delayed by over a day as the 166-nation bloc struggled to reach consensus on fishing, agriculture and other issues. The only agreement of note came on extending a pause on taxes on digital media such as movies and video games. On that issue, the WTO decided to extend the pause until their next biennial meeting.

Hits and Misses

The WTO, the only international body dealing with the rules of trade between nations, requires full consensus from all members to chalk up deals. It was hoping the MC13 would replicate the landmark success of its 2022 ministerial in Geneva, which yielded a deal on fisheries and saw members agree to restore a now-defunct dispute settlement system by the end of this year. But the latest ministerial fell short of that objective.

Here is a summary of what was achieved and what was not:

New WTO Members

Comoros and Timor-Leste formally joined the World Trade Organization on the opening day in Abu Dhabi, becoming the 165th and 166th members of the body, respectively.

E-Commerce

- Countries agreed to extend a moratorium, open new tab on placing tariffs on digital goods until the next ministerial conference in two years' time. Then, the deal is set to expire at the start of that meeting, requiring more extensive negotiations.
- Several countries, including India and South Africa, were opposed to the extension of a moratorium on e-commerce backed by the vast majority of countries and seen as vital to businesses to avoid tariffs on digital goods like film downloads.
- On the plus side, a draft programme was agreed for future work beyond Abu Dhabi.

Dispute settlement

- Countries agreed to commit to continue negotiations in 2024 to try to resolve a crisis in its dispute settlement system whose top court has been hobbled for four years due to US opposition.
- This means many trade disputes are unresolved since countries can appeal them into a legal void and the WTO's

rules cannot be enforced.

- India's minister Piyush Goyal said it is "sad" countries are obstructing outcomes. He did not mention Washington directly but said he had raised a lack of progress on fixing the WTO's dispute system with US Trade Representative Katherine Tai.

- Tai has said negotiations on this issue are positive and have shown progress. However, delegates say obstacles abound and are privately sceptical of them making much further headway in a US presidential election year.

- A group of countries sought to reach a friendly agreement, supported by the European Union, to refrain from appealing WTO disputes into the void but this did not win consensus among members.

Agriculture

- No agreement was reached.

- India, which is facing farmer protests at home and has elections due by May, had sought a permanent solution on public stockholding (PSH) – a term that refers to state policies on food procurement aimed at ensuring food security.

- Two alternative solutions were envisaged in a draft agreement. One aimed to find a permanent solution to the issue at this meeting, and the other committed to intensifying negotiations and extending to other developing countries the privileges only India currently enjoys under WTO rules.

- India rejected the second proposal, intended to appease them, in talks between a few key countries, including the United States, Brazil and China.

Fisheries

- No deal was reached in Abu Dhabi.

- Countries had tried to agree to the second part of an international WTO agreement to curb government subsidies that critics say encourage industrial fishing fleets to empty the world's oceans. A first part was agreed in 2022 and will take effect if and when enough countries ratify it.

- Many participants, including USTR's Tai, saw this as the most likely topic where a deal could be reached. Environmentalists say it is vital for the world's oceans.

- A new draft agreement was issued with a few sections in yellow, indicating areas of non-agreement including rules for phase-in periods for developing countries. □

The writer is a member of staff.

INTERNATIONAL

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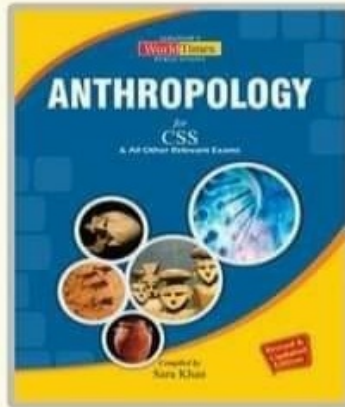
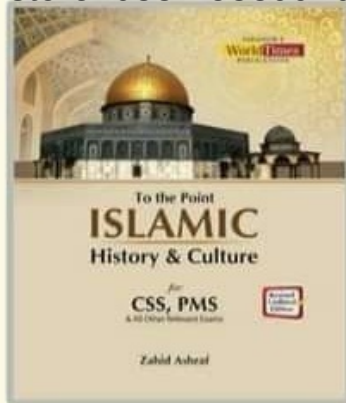
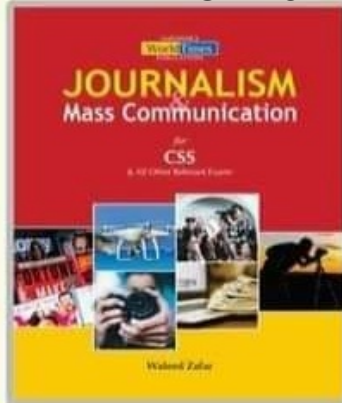
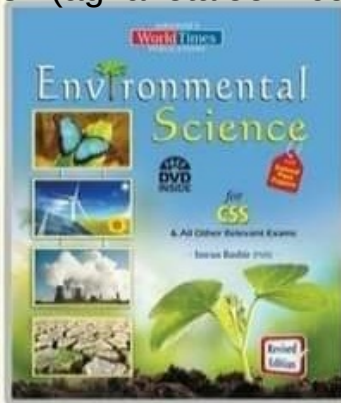
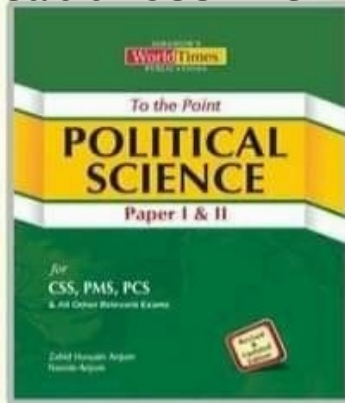


Amid allegations of Indian interference in Bangladesh's recent national elections, wherein the incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed's party, the Awami League, won 224 seats in the 350-strong Jatiya Sangsad, the country is witnessing the emergence of a new motivated campaign: "India Out" campaign. This is on the lines of a similar campaign carried out in the Maldives last year, where Mohamed Muizzu capitalized on anti-India sentiment to win the presidential election. More broadly, the boycott campaign has provided a focus for deep-seated resentment of India in Bangladesh, driven by border and water grievances and by a sense that India's Hindu nationalist ruling party looks down on its Muslim neighbours.

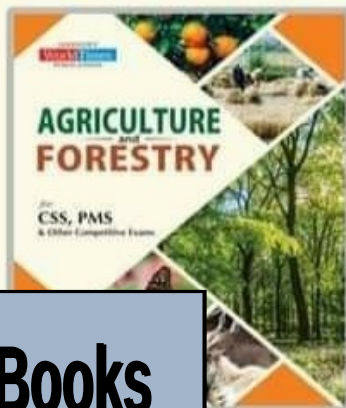
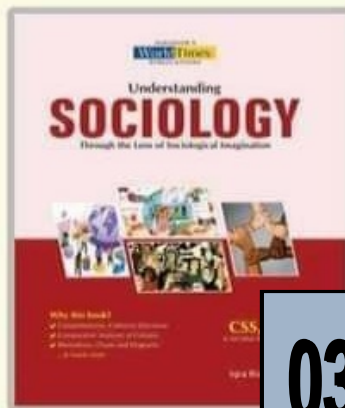
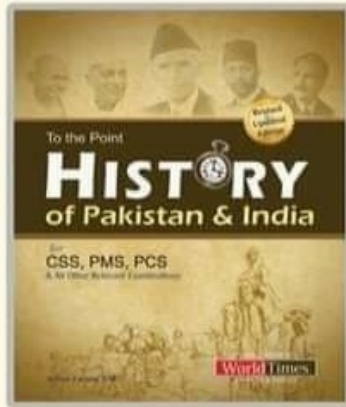


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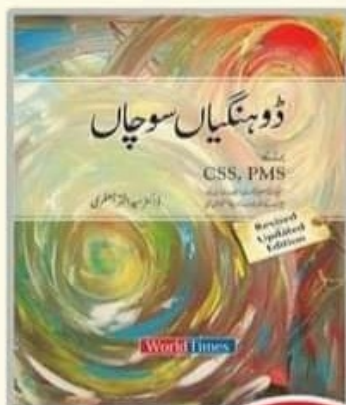
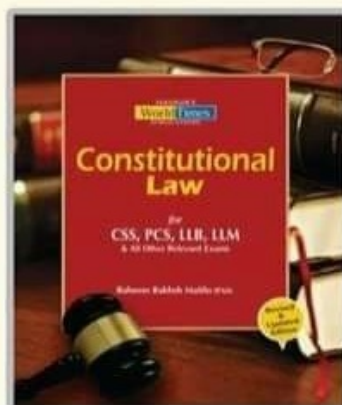
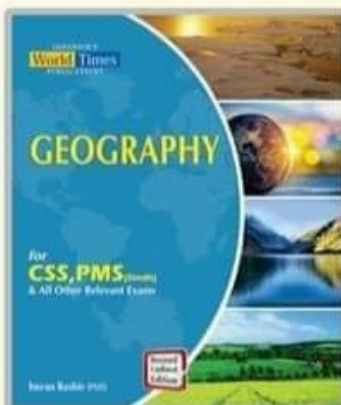
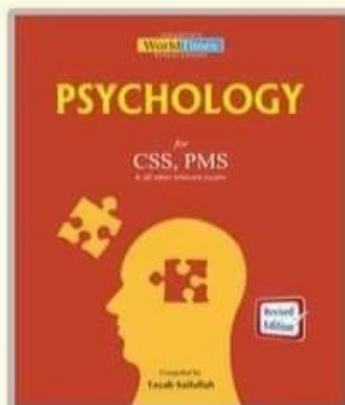
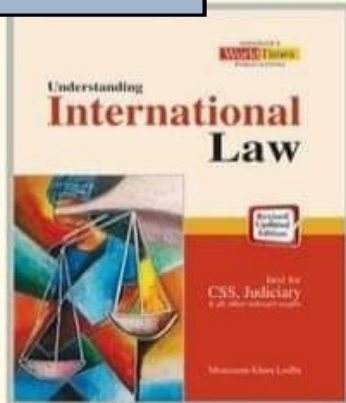
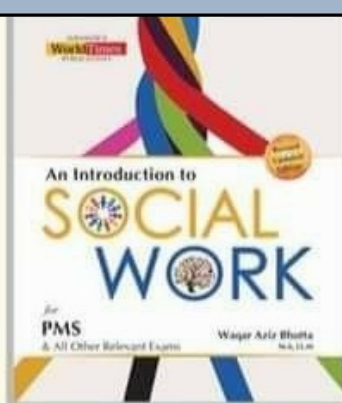
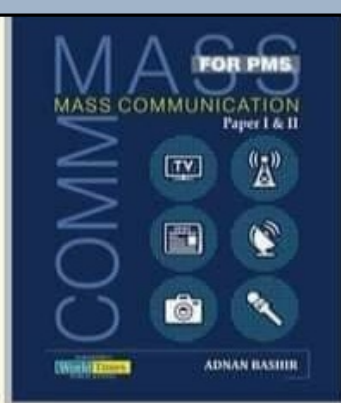
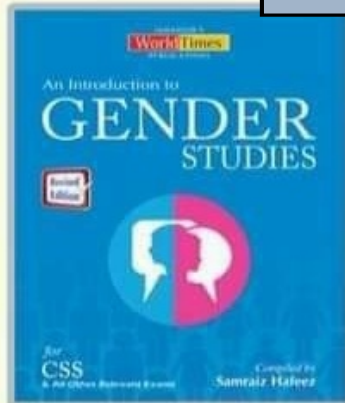
After the success of the 'India Out' campaign in the Maldives, a similar campaign has now gained strength in Bangladesh. In the wake of the January 2024 elections, in which the incumbent premier Sheikh Hasina secured another term, a massive "India Out" campaign has been launched in the country, alleging Indian interference in its internal politics. The campaign calls on Bangladeshis to boycott Indian products and oppose India's interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs. The proponents of the campaign believe that India has been pulling out all the stops to keep one political party of its choice in power. And, the same thing happened in recent elections where Sheikh Hasina's party, the Awami League, faced almost no effective rivals on the seats it contested, but it avoided fielding candidates in a few constituencies, in an apparent effort to avoid the legislature being branded a one-party institution. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the largest opposition party in the country, boycotted the election after the Awami League refused to install a neutral caretaker government to oversee the voting. Its absence from the ballot left the ruling party with no effective opposition. Though the top BNP leadership has not condoned the boycott call, its media cell, and/or its magazine 'The Road to Democracy' launched what appears to be a coordinated campaign on January 18. In its tweet, the party's media wing cited the contents of a YouTube video that claimed: "India has openly interfered and influenced Bangladeshi elections for the past 15 years," and that "Bangladesh has suffered the most politically due to the wrong policies of the Indian government." The campaign, carried out on social media and fuelled



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INTERNATIONAL

#IndiaOut #BoycottIndia #BoycottIndianProducts

SAY TO INDIAN PRODUCTS NO



by the Bangladeshi diaspora around the world, seeks to boycott Indian products sold in Bangladesh. Soon after the campaign was launched, many shops in Bangladesh reported a drop in sales of many previously popular Indian consumer products, such as cooking oil, processed foods, toiletry, cosmetics and clothing. Some shopkeepers said they had failed to clear old stock and had stopped taking inventory of goods from India.

This campaign reflects a growing impression that the continued tenure of the Awami League in Dhaka serves India's security, strategic and economic interests. For example, the AL government has given India access to its sensitive ports, highways and other infrastructure, provided lucrative deals to India's companies, and allowed its citizens unrestricted employment in Bangladesh. The AL has also failed to protest India's "shoot-to-kill" policy, under which hundreds of Bangladeshis have been slain by Indian border guards, and its withdrawal of water from rivers that flow from India into Bangladesh.

Moreover, backers of the campaign assert that without India's support for the AL government, the US might have also played a more robust role before or after the election. The United States had threatened last year to impose visa restrictions on Bangladeshi individuals who are found complicit in 'undermining the democratic electoral process' in Bangladesh. No sanctions were imposed, however, after the January election. The citizens of Bangladesh hold the view that Indian influence played a

pivotal role in the United States' decision to retract from imposing visa restrictions in the aftermath of a sham election.

The campaign has been launched following in the Maldives' footsteps. Its inspiration comes from a recent campaign in the Maldives that helped Mohamed Muizzu capitalise on anti-India sentiment and win the presidency in November last. Together, these two campaigns express the strong antipathy India's neighbours feel towards India.

In neighbouring countries of India, there is a widespread sentiment of fear, hostility and opposition towards India. This sentiment has deep historical roots, and the recent outbreak of anti-India sentiment expresses a sense of resentment and opposition towards India's strong interference in the internal affairs and diplomacy of neighbouring countries in recent years. Under the "Neighbourhood First" policy of the Modi government, India has become more deeply involved in the internal affairs and diplomacy of neighbouring countries, cultivating support for pro-India forces by manipulating different political parties and religious groups, and suppressing nationalist forces within these countries. Furthermore, India has constructed an illusory narrative of "Akhand Bharat," which includes almost all neighbouring countries within its domain, not only belittling and diminishing other countries but also exposing India's pursuit of regional dominance.

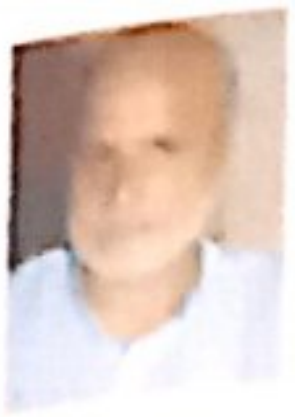
Fundamentally, foreign actions are determined by an ideological consciousness. In this mindset, India's political elites view South Asia as their backyard and the Indian Ocean as India's own ocean. India perceives the order in the South Asian region through hierarchical caste-based thinking, considering itself the "Brahmin" at the top of this regional structure, expecting other countries to accept and obey the privileged rule and political guidance of the Brahmins. However, with the withdrawal of the British Empire from South Asia after World War II, South Asian countries have gradually developed into modern nation-states, and the concept of sovereign equality has become deeply ingrained. No country is willing to accept being under India's influence, and no political elite of any neighbouring country is willing to submit to New Delhi. As President Mohamed Muizzu of the Maldives said, "We are not in the backyard of any particular country. The Indian Ocean does not belong to any particular country."

Although India does not have the same strength and geographical conditions as the US, it wants to pursue a regional "Monroe Doctrine" like the US did. India's manipulation of Bhutan far exceeds the US' control of its backyard country, Panama. In pursuit of regional hegemony, India's successive leaders have followed two principles: not allowing any major country to cross the Himalayas and not sharing the Indian Ocean with any major country. It treats any major country that does not recognize India's dominant position in South Asia and the Indian Ocean, as a hostile force endangering India's interests. In the past, the US was a "hostile force" that endangered India's regional hegemony. However, with the rise of China, India sees China as its biggest challenge and believes that it is precisely because of China's "backing" that South Asian countries dare to challenge India. ■

The writer is a CSS aspirant.

INTERNATIONAL

Shafqat Javed



Weeks after the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the rollout of the controversial Uniform Civil Code in

Uttarakhand, the BJP's Hindu nationalist government has ticked another important box in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls in which Modi seeks a rare third term in office. The enactment of rules to implement the contentious 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which aims to fast-track citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants — Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians — who came to India from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan before December 31, 2014, fleeing persecution on religious grounds, marks another attempt by Modi government at intensifying communal polarisation in the country.

Background

At the time of the partition of the Indian subcontinent into Pakistan and India in 1947, those who moved across the freshly demarcated boundaries of the two countries

On March 11, the Indian government notified the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024, around four years after the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), a controversial piece of legislation that allowed non-Muslim religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan to seek Indian citizenship. The law, which has been severely criticised for being against Muslims, had triggered protests in many parts of India which ensued in a spate of anti-Muslim incidents in the country. The implementation of the CAA has been one of the key poll promises of Modi's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the run-up to general elections this year.

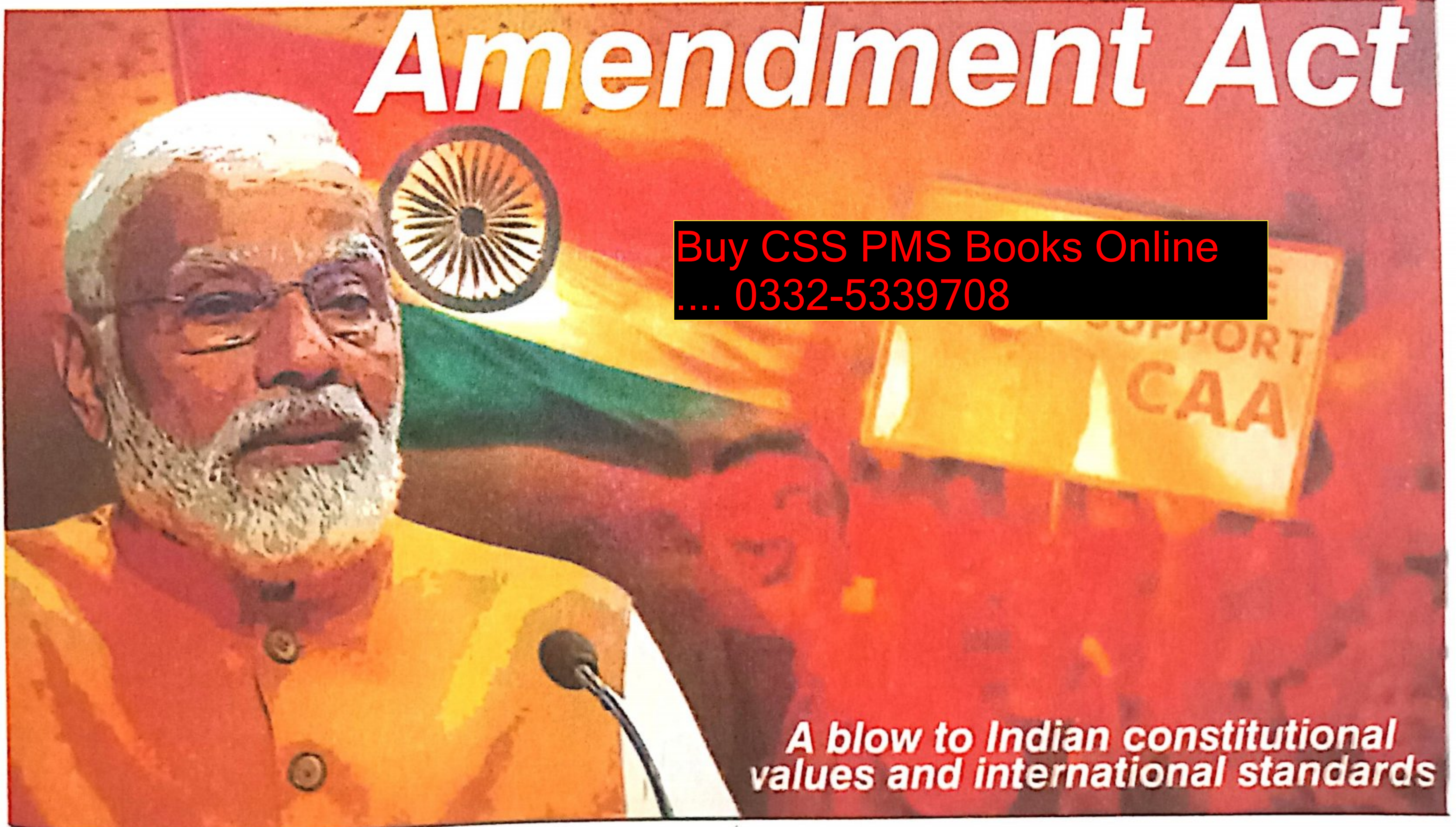
were deemed citizens of the countries they migrated to. However, those who moved to India later had to follow the rules framed under India's Citizenship Act of 1955.

But, in December 2019, the Indian Parliament passed an amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955, to include a provision for the grant of citizenship to migrants belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian communities who entered India before December 31, 2014 from Pakistan, Afghanistan or Bangladesh due to 'religious persecution'.

It was a curious law because it included only Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians along with Hindus, as the BJP's main aim was to attract the Hindu vote bank. It discriminated against Muslims who have long been, and are still, facing persecution in countries like Myanmar.

The ulterior motive of the legislation was to show that Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, all Muslim-majority countries, were targeting non-Muslim minorities.

India's Citizenship Amendment Act



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A blow to Indian constitutional values and international standards

The law, which was notified on January 10, 2020, sparked mass protests around the country, particularly in Assam, in which scores of people died and thousands were arrested. It was strongly opposed by many, especially by the Muslim community, as it introduced a religion-based test for the grant of citizenship to immigrants from three chosen countries. It is still under legal challenge before the Supreme Court of India. Although the Modi government asserted that the law was not politically or electorally motivated but was rather aimed at weeding out infiltrators and streamlining the grant of citizenship, it could not be implemented in the absence of the Rules as the process of their drawing up was halted in the wake of the unrest.

Problems with the law

The problem with the CAA is two-fold: first, in its discriminatory norm that specifies some religious communities as eligible for citizenship. All those from these six religions in these three countries are presumed to have fled persecution. Others who do not fall into this category, either due to their entering the country after the cut-off date, or because of their religion, will continue to be treated as illegal migrants. The second aspect is the CAA with the National Register of Citizens (NRC). This rhetoric accentuated the fears among Muslims that the CAA may lead to the loss of citizenship without adequate documentary proof. More than its content, the CAA is causing harm through its use for the Narendra Modi regime's political messaging to the effect that all its policies will have an underpinning of religion.

Apprehensions

Muslim groups, opposition parties and rights activists say the law discriminates against Muslims and undermines India's secular constitution. Some also question why it does not include Muslims fleeing Buddhist-majority Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

In states such as Assam in the east, CAA has sparked concerns about increased migration from neighbouring Bangladesh, which has been a flashpoint in the region for decades.

On the other hand, some Muslims in

Assam and West Bengal fear that the law, combined with a proposed NRC, could be used to declare them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and take away their citizenship.

Politicizing religion

Before the CAA, India's citizenship law did not make religion a determinant of a person's eligibility for an Indian passport. All those seeking naturalisation had to show that they were in India legally, and needed to wait for the same period - 11 years - to become eligible for citizenship.

That's what the CAA changes - introducing for the first time in independent India's history - a religious test for citizenship.

Muslim victims of religious persecution in Afghanistan (the Hazara) or other neighbouring nations - such as the Rohingya in Myanmar - will still need to wait for 11 years before they become eligible for Indian citizenship. And unlike Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians, they need valid documentation to justify their presence in India.

This violates Article 14 of the Indian Constitution, which says: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India."

In 2019, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a statement describing the law as discriminatory against Muslims. But, it is also true that other communities - including many who have long sought refuge in India - have also been denied the benefits of the law.

Timing of enactment

Modi government's decision to

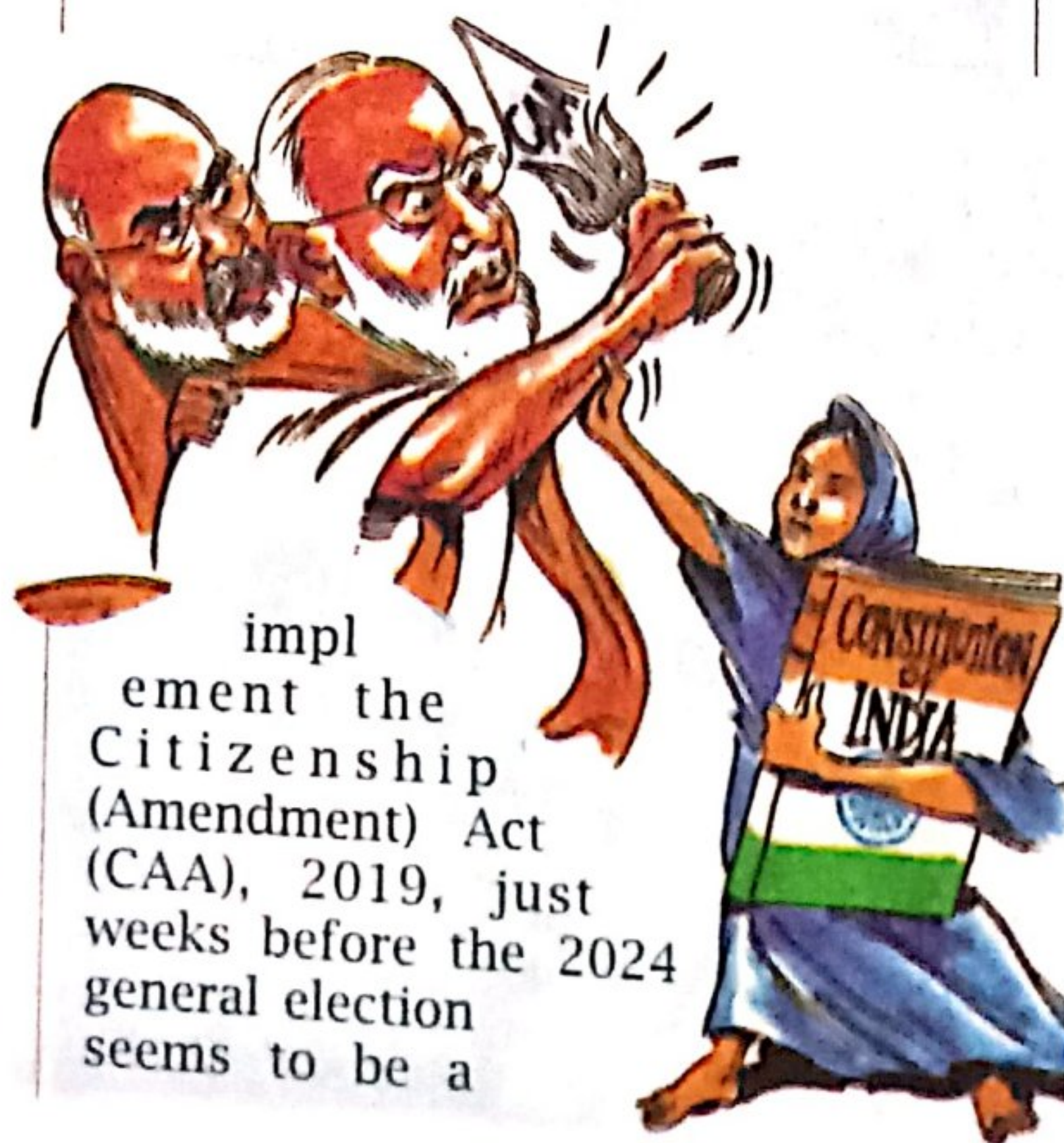
precursor to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) exploiting a polarising issue in the poll campaign. The March 11 announcement did not come as a surprise to many though, as BJP leaders have been dropping hints over the past few months that the law could be implemented before the elections. After the notification was issued, BJP handles trended hashtags like "Jo Kaha So Kiya" (We did what we said) online.

The timing of the rules being notified raises a legitimate doubt if it is an attempt to divert attention away from the electoral bonds controversy. The rules were unveiled at a time when the nation was questioning the delay in the submission of details about the purchasers of anonymous electoral bonds and the parties that redeemed them. The circumstances make one question the urgent need to implement a law that has not been acted upon for five years. The new rules also appear carefully crafted, designed as they are to introduce processes that will leave no scope for States to impede its implementation. It is possible that the rules were ready for a long time, and the CAA issue is being revived for electoral gains.

Modi government's hypocrisy

While the BJP seems overly concerned about the plight of non-Muslims in South Asia, under its rule, it has subjected India's own Muslims to blatant injustice and stood by as Hindu zealots, as well as state institutions, have unleashed violence upon the community. India is home to 200 million Muslims who make up a large minority group in the country of more than 1.4 billion people. They are scattered across almost every part of India and have been targeted in a series of attacks that have taken place since Modi first assumed power in 2014. Scores of Muslims have been lynched by Hindu mobs over allegations of eating beef or smuggling cows. Muslim businesses have been boycotted, their localities have been bulldozed and places of worship set on fire. Some open calls have been made for their genocide.

Under Sangh Parivar's watch, Indian Muslims have also faced discriminatory citizenship laws - such as the CAA and NRC - seen



impl
ement the
Citizenship
(Amendment) Act
(CAA), 2019, just
weeks before the 2024
general election
seems to be a

their homes and mosques bulldozed on flimsy grounds and watched state functionaries publicly attack their religious and cultural practices. In other words, Muslims are the new anathema in India. Critics say Modi's conspicuous silence over anti-Muslim violence has emboldened some of his most extreme supporters and enabled more hate speech against Muslims.

It is ironical that the BJP and its ideological mentor - RSS - with their assertion of Hindu identity and their barely concealed anti-Muslim and anti-Christian rhetoric, should claim to stand up for persecuted religious minorities in the neighbourhood. This is a contradiction, but only in the eyes of the liberals. The BJP-RSS duo has never been apologetic about its brazenly Hindu majoritarian bias. Its diktat to Muslims and Christians in India is clear — follow Hindu culture and admit your Hindu ancestry. It is cultural bullying and that is the basic tenet of Hindutva that motivates the politics of the BJP and the RSS.

The CAA had been in limbo, and the Modi government did not want to be seen as passing a piece of legislation and then ignoring it. Despite the government's claims that it has wrought an economic miracle in the country in the past 10 years, BJP leaders — especially Narendra Modi and Amit Shah — feel the need to emphasise in as many ways as possible, direct or indirect, that they represent the Hindu interests in the country so as to bolster the party's electoral prospects. The BJP and the Modi-Shah duo are not content to rest on the ostensible achievements of governance. They have to demonstrate that the party is working for Hindus.

What's next?

There are more than 200 petitions against the law still pending before Indian courts, even as the CAA has come into effect.

Modi government has denied that the law is discriminatory towards Muslims, arguing that it only seeks to protect those escaping religious persecution. A statement released by the Home Ministry said that "many misconceptions have been spread" about the law and that its implementation was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the same time, critics fear that

the Hindu majoritarian BJP will also seek to implement another initiative, the National Register of Citizens, which aims to identify and deport immigrants in India without valid papers.

Combined, the CAA and NRC could allow the Modi government to expel all of those deemed "illegal" migrants - and then allow Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians to re-enter, while denying the same opportunity to Muslims.

BJP leaders have previously made remarks discriminating against Muslim refugees. Home Minister Shah has, in the past, called Bangladeshi immigrants "termites", "infiltrators" and a threat to national security.

Conclusion

The Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, has been controversial from the beginning and has been criticised as wrongly conceived, unconstitutional, discriminatory

and unfair. Although the Act has been challenged in the Supreme Court of India and the matter is sub judice, the Modi government has framed the rules, claiming that it has delivered on yet another commitment it had made to the people. However, no sane person can deny that electoral intent is writ large on the government's decision to notify the rules for implementation of the contentious CAA which has been frozen for over four years. It is likely that the notification is specially targeted at states like West Bengal, which has a large Muslim population and is considered a battleground state. There is no satisfactory answer to the question why the rules were not notified for over four years and why it has been done just ahead of elections. □

The writer is an Assistant Editor of JWT.

What do the notified rules say

- CAA rules lay down administrative architect for granting citizenship to non-Muslim migrants under Section 6B of the Citizenship Act
- Expiry of visa or illegal migration does not bar making application for citizenship
- Applications should attach a document such as passport, birth or school certificate, licence or any ID record issued by Afghanistan/Bangladesh/Pakistan to establish nationality
- Applications must also attach a document issued by India to prove that applicant entered India on or before Dec 31, 2014
- Every application is mandated to produce eligibility certificate from a locally reputed community institution identifying the applicant
- Applications for registration or naturalisation under Section 6B shall be submitted in electronic form to empowered committee through district level committee (DLC)
- DLC, headed by a designated officer, shall verify identity and documents of applicant
- Designated officer shall administer oath of allegiance to Indian Constitution and laws of India
- Empowered committee, after scrutinising application, may grant or refuse citizenship
- Chairman of empowered committee shall issue digital certificate or registration or naturalisation
- Rules provide different forms for applying for citizenship through registration and naturalisation
- Applicants to state on oath their intention is to make India as permanent home and an undertaking of renouncing citizenship of country they have migrated from
- For application for certificate of naturalisation, an Indian citizen must submit an affidavit testifying character of applicant

Cases pending in Supreme Court

- Validity of CAA is under challenge before SC through 200+ petitions. Petitioners include Cong leader Jairam Ramesh, the Indian Union Muslim League, and its MPs, Lok Sabha MP and AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, RJD leader Manoj Jha and TMC MP Mahua Moitra
- The law has been questioned on grounds of religious discrimination against Muslims and arbitrariness
- In Oct 2022, Centre filed affidavit to say the issue was not amenable to judicial review since matters of citizenship, immigration and foreign policy fall squarely within the domain of parliament
- Pleas against validity of Section 6B have not been effectively heard for over a year now



THE ENERGY CHARTER TREATY

INTERNATIONAL



The government of the United Kingdom announced, in February 2024, to withdraw from the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), a landmark yet controversial investment pact that allowed energy companies – many of them using coal and other fossil fuels – to sue governments over policies putting their investments at risk. Announcing the decision, the UK Energy Security and Net Zero Minister Graham Stuart said that Britain is leaving the ECT due to its failure to align with "net zero" emission targets. "Today, the UK joins 9 EU member states, including France, Spain and the Netherlands, in withdrawing from the treaty. [It] is outdated and in urgent need of reform but talks have stalled and sensible renewal looks increasingly unlikely ... [r]emaining a member would not support our transition to cleaner, cheaper energy, and could even penalise us for our world-leading efforts to deliver net zero," he said.

In this write-up, we will explore the treaty and know why more and more European governments are exiting it, as France, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands are also pulling out while the European Parliament has called for the entire 27-nation European Union to withdraw.

The Treaty

The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) is an international agreement that establishes a framework for cross-border cooperation in the energy industry.

It is a legally binding pact signed by 52 countries – mainly in Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East – as well as the EU.

Established in the 1990s when the world energy system was heavily dominated by fossil fuels, e.g. coal, gas and oil, the treaty was originally intended to encourage international energy investment.

It was drawn up at the fall of the Soviet Union to protect European energy firms with fossil fuel assets in ex-Soviet states.

Signed in December 1994 and entered into legal force in April 1998, the treaty is designed to promote international investment in the energy sector, historically providing protections for investors in fossil fuels – a multilateral framework for energy cooperation that is unique under international law.

It is designed to promote energy security through the operation of more open and competitive energy markets, while respecting the principles of sustainable

Aftab Abbasi

development and sovereignty over energy resources.

It aims to promote energy security by protecting energy firms against risks to their investments and trade, such as having their assets seized or contracts breached.

It grants the right to challenge governments over policies that could harm investments – not just in fossil fuels but also in hydropower, solar, wind and other clean energy sources.

The Treaty was preceded by a political declaration, the European Energy Charter (EEC) adopted in The Hague on 17 December 1991. The EEC Charter contained a commitment to negotiate in good faith a legally binding Energy Charter Treaty and Protocols.

Focus

The Treaty's provisions focus on four broad areas:

- The protection of foreign investments, based on the extension of national treatment, or most-favoured nation treatment (whichever is more favourable) and protection against key non-commercial risks.
- Non-discriminatory conditions for trade in energy materials, products and energy-related equipment based on WTO rules, and provisions to ensure reliable cross-border energy transit flows through pipelines, grids and other means of transportation.
- The resolution of disputes between participating states, and – in the case of investments – between investors and host states.
- The promotion of energy efficiency, and attempts to minimise the environmental impact of energy production and use.

Why are countries quitting?

The Treaty has allowed foreign companies to challenge energy policies that threaten their investments under a secretive arbitration process. This has led to a number of countries facing costly legal challenges over reducing their reliance on fossil fuels and boosting renewables. Some reasons behind growing aversion to it are enumerated below:

a. Rising costs

Legal claims made by fossil fuel companies challenging

environmental measures are on the rise. Experts warn that the risk of legal action could cause governments to delay policies to reduce planet-heating emissions, such as phasing down oil and gas production.

As countries have shifted towards renewable and more sustainable energy sources, European governments have increasingly baulked at remaining part of the treaty. The United Nations' Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and Environment, David Boyd, warned in December that an "explosion" of multibillion-dollar claims by fossil fuel and extractive firms through shadowy investment tribunals was blocking action on climate and nature.

Developing nations were increasingly being targeted, he said, adding that fossil fuel and mining industries had won over \$100 billion in awards.

The European Commission stated in February, 2023, its intention to coordinate a withdrawal of the entire bloc from the pact ratified in 1994 to protect energy investments in post-Soviet states.

EU countries are the target of 90% of ECT disputes. This litigation threat has hamstrung climate policy to the point where the EU can "wave bye-bye to carbon neutrality targets," according to Yamina Saheb, a climate expert and former ECT employee.

When the Netherlands, for example, legislated a 2030 coal-fired power phase-out in an effort to reduce carbon emissions, German energy giants Uniper and RWE sued the government under the treaty. In the closed-door arbitration court where ECT disputes are settled, RWE demanded €1.4 billion (\$1.55 billion) compensation from the Dutch government — despite RWE subsequently agreeing to its own 2030 coal phase-out in exchange for the right to mine lignite under Lützerath in western Germany.

That case is ongoing, though Uniper withdrew its claim as part of a bailout agreement with the German government. The ECT's chill effect on climate ambition is strengthened by a zombie or sunset clause, whereby states can be sued for another 20 years following their withdrawal from the treaty. This loophole was

exploited by UK oil company Rockhopper in 2017 when it sued the Italian government — after it became the first state to exit the ECT — for banning oil drilling on the Adriatic coast. Most of the \$224.4 million claim, which succeeded in August 2022, was for projected future earnings — another contentious ECT clause.

Failed treaty modernization

Dissatisfaction with a modernization process that was initiated in 2018 to make it compatible with the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change has prompted states to start quitting the treaty. However, the recent defections from the treaty are a sudden about face from June 2022, when the European Commission agreed on a series of modernization measures to better align the ECT with climate goals. Governments have been unable to vote on

adopting the reforms, after the EU failed to get a majority of its member states to agree to the proposed amendments. The countries that oppose them argue that the proposed changes are not enough to align the ECT with climate policies, as they would allow fossil-fuel investments to be protected for at least another decade.

But with one reform clause protecting existing fossil fuel investments for the next 10 years, France, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands decided modernization didn't go far enough. Announcing their intention to leave the treaty, they were also able to block a scheduled November 2022 vote on the reform measures in the European Council.

While the ECT secretariat wanted to push on with another modernization vote in April 2023, the Commission has not scheduled a meeting and is instead negotiating a coordinated withdrawal.

Which countries are withdrawing?

Ireland, Denmark and Portugal announced their withdrawals in 2023, after Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Slovenia walked out in 2022.

Italy was the first EU country to quit the treaty in 2016, citing budget restrictions.

Britain's withdrawal will take effect after one year.

The European Commission has proposed a wholesale EU exit from the treaty, saying that, as it is, the charter is not in line with the EU's investment protection or climate policies.

Conclusion

Although this post-Cold War treaty was intended to protect investments in petroleum-rich post-Soviet states, it has mainly been used by energy firms to sue western European governments, blaming bickering in Brussels for blocking reform. Unsurprisingly, a treaty that enables petroleum firms to sue governments whose climate and environment policies impact hoped for future profits has long been a target for climate campaigners — but now they see the end in sight. The UK's move is a "hammer blow" to the ECT's chances of survival.

The writer is a member of staff.

THE ENERGY CHARTER TREATY

The world's most dangerous investment agreement

- fully applies to 48 countries
- dozens from Africa, Asia and Latin America about to sign



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EXPANSION OF EUROPE'S SCHENGEN AREA

Fajar Sulman Butt

March 31 saw a historic development in Europe when the Schengen area, already the widest free-travel area globally, expanded with the inclusion of Bulgaria and Romania. It means that the checks on persons at EU internal air and maritime borders between the two Balkan states and the other countries in the Schengen area became a thing of the past. Talks will, however, continue next year on opening land borders.

Background

Since their accession to the European Union (EU) in 2007, Bulgaria and Romania have applied parts of the Schengen legal framework (the Schengen acquis), including those related to external border controls, police cooperation and the use of the Schengen Information System. For the remaining parts of the Schengen acquis, which include the lifting of controls at internal borders and related measures, the European Council unanimously agreed, on December 30, 2023, to accept both countries into the Schengen area. Although Austria had objected to expanding the zone, fearing more illegal immigration, it later agreed that the two Balkan states could enter the zone in stages.

What is Schengen?

Located about 35 km east of Luxembourg City, it is a small town at the tri-border of Luxembourg, Germany and France where the agreement was signed in 1985 among five of the six EU founding members, except Italy, to create a border-free area in Europe that allows the free movement of people, goods, services and capital.

The Schengen visa is a result of the Schengen Implementation Convention, which lifted numerous internal borders within the EU, enabling unrestricted movement between signatory countries.

What is the Schengen area?

- After signing the Schengen agreement, the

signatories abolished the border checks along the common borders within the area and individuals can travel freely within the area.

- The agreement allows residents to cross the border freely without having to go through fixed checkpoints and has harmonized visa policies.
- Thus, the Schengen agreement abolished border control and allowed free movement within countries in the area.

In what can be called a significant evolution in the European travel landscape, Europe's Schengen border-free zone further expanded, on March 31, when two Balkan states, Bulgaria and Romania, joined this largest free travel zone in the world. This is the ninth enlargement of the area, and the EU hopes the decision will strengthen the internal market and boost travel, trade and tourism. The new additions, alongside the digitization of the Schengen visa process, which scraps visa stickers on passports, are changing the face of travel within the regional bloc, as borders dissolve, freeing up more travel tales and people-to-people connections.

The area comprises 27 European countries that have abolished border controls and allow the free movement of people living in Schengen countries or people visiting as tourists.

Europe's border-free Schengen area guarantees free movement to close to 450 million EU citizens, along with non-EU nationals living in the EU or visiting the EU. Free movement means every EU citizen can travel, work and live in an EU country without special formalities. The Schengen area underpins this freedom by allowing citizens to move around the 27 Schengen member countries without any border checks.

The Schengen area is an integral part of the EU's legal framework. According to the treaties, all EU Member States need to become, when ready, full members of the Schengen area. This is both a right and an

INTERNATIONAL

obligation.

Schengen and the EU: What's the difference?

- It's essential to note that the EU and Schengen area are two different zones and their borders do not perfectly coincide.
- While 22 of the 26 current Schengen states are EU members, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland, and Switzerland are not.
- The EU, with 28 member states, has abolished internal visas and transferred some powers to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.
- It's important to highlight that some states and territories adhere to the Schengen Agreement but are not part of the Schengen Convention.
- A Schengen visa-holder can visit certain areas (Madeira, the Azores, and the Canary Islands (in the Atlantic Ocean), as well as San Marino, the Vatican, Monaco, and Andorra), but they cannot enter the Schengen zone from these states/territories without a Schengen visa.

Schengen Area Countries

- The 27 member countries of the Schengen area are: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia,

Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

- Croatia, an EU member since 2013, joined Schengen in 2023, while Romania and Bulgaria, EU members since 2007, gained partial Schengen entry from 31 March 2024.
- Non-EU countries like Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland are part of Schengen through special association agreements.
- Over time, the Schengen area has grown to encompass 27 countries, spanning over 4 million square kilometres and hosting nearly 420 million inhabitants.

Benefits of Schengen

- For nationals of any country, the benefit is the freedom to travel with a single Schengen visa to other European nations within the borderless area. It enables seamless travel for over 400 million individuals across member states without border checks.
- It facilitates approximately 1.25 billion journeys annually, fostering tourism, cultural exchange and economic prosperity.
- Schengen promotes cooperation among police, customs and border control authorities to combat terrorism and organized crime.
- For nationals of Schengen countries, visa-free travel and the absence of internal border checks enhance convenience and facilitate economic integration.

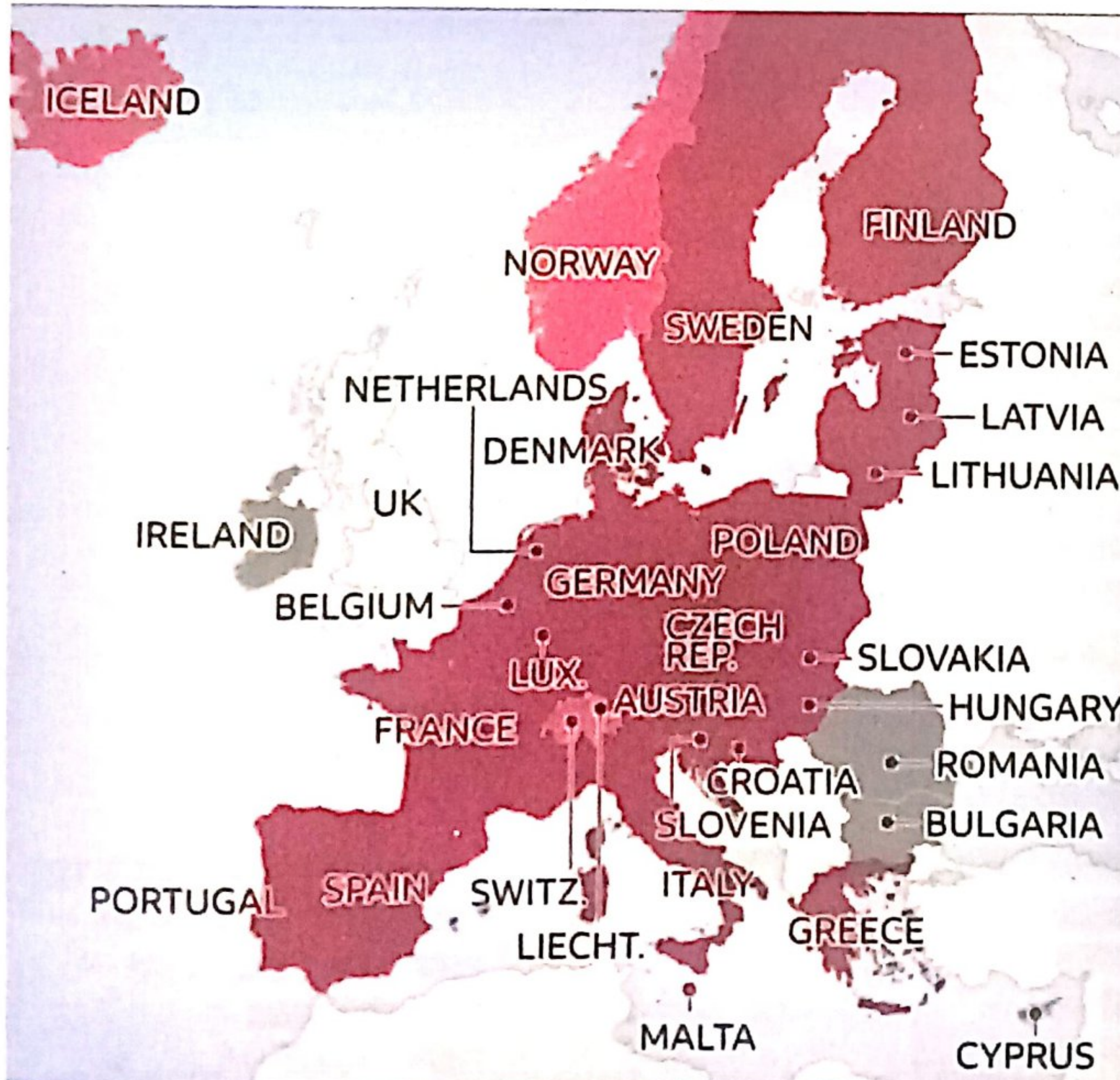
- For EU states, visa-free borderless travel, alongside the single currency adopted by 20 EU countries, is the most visible symbol of European integration.

Next Steps

- The EU expects that the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen area will help make the Union more attractive and prosperous by eliminating time lost at borders and facilitating smoother travel for people and businesses.
- Discussions on a date for the possible lifting of controls at land borders will continue in 2024, and a decision by the Council is expected to be reached within a reasonable timeframe. In the meantime, border checks will continue to apply for those travelling by land between either Bulgaria or Romania and other Schengen area countries. 

The writer is a student of law.

Countries in the Schengen Agreement



- Schengen states
- Schengen states not part of the EU
- Non-Schengen EU states

Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2023

A look at the SIPRI report

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a European think tank which tracks arms sales globally, recently released its annual report "Trends in International Arms Transfers," which details the import and export of weapons around the world between 2019 and 2023.

Top Exporters

- Arms exports by the United States, the world's largest arms supplier, rose by 17% between 2014–18 and 2019–23, and its share of total global arms exports rose from 34% to 42%.
 - The USA delivered major arms to 107 states in the said period, which was more than the next two biggest exporters combined.
 - The largest share of US arms exports went to states in the Middle East (38%).
 - Four Middle Eastern states were among the top 10 recipients of US arms: Saudi Arabia accounted for 15% of US arms exports, Qatar for 8.2%, Kuwait for 4.5% and Israel for 3.6%.
- France narrowly overtook Russia to become the world's second largest exporter of major arms in 2019–23.
- France delivered major arms to 64 states but India was by far the largest recipient, accounting for 29% of French arms exports.
- Russia's arms exports fell by 53% between 2014–18 and 2019–23 and it accounted for 11% of total global arms exports.
 - It delivered major arms to 41 states and 1 non-state armed group.
 - States in Asia and Oceania received 68% of total Russian arms exports, while Middle Eastern and African states received 13% and 10%, respectively.
 - Just under two-thirds of Russian arms exports went to three states: India (34%), China (21%) and Egypt (7.5%).
 - India was also the largest recipient of Russian arms in 2014–18.
- China accounted for 5.8% of total global arms exports in 2019–23. Its arms exports decreased by 5.3% between 2014–18 and 2019–23. The bulk of Chinese arms exports (85%) went to states in Asia and Oceania, followed by states in Africa (9.9%). China delivered major arms to 40 states, but well over half of its

arms exports (61%) went to just one state—Pakistan.

- Arms exports by Germany made up 5.6% of the global total in 2019–23.
 - States in the Middle East received the largest share of all German arms exports (39%), followed by states in Asia and Oceania (28%) and Europe (25%).

Top Importers

- SIPRI has identified 170 states as importers of major arms in 2019–23.
- The top five arms importers—India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Ukraine and Pakistan—received 35% of all arms imports in the period.
- Imports of major arms by states in Europe increased by 94% between 2014–18 and 2019–23, while the global volume of international arms transfers decreased marginally, by 3.3%.
- States in Asia and Oceania and the Middle East continued to import arms in much larger volumes than those in Europe.
 - Nine of the 10 biggest arms importers in 2019–23, including the top 3 of India, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, were in Asia and Oceania or the Middle East.

India's arms imports increased by 4.7% between 2014–18 and 2019–23, making it the world's biggest arms importer in 2019–23 with a 9.8% share of all arms imports.

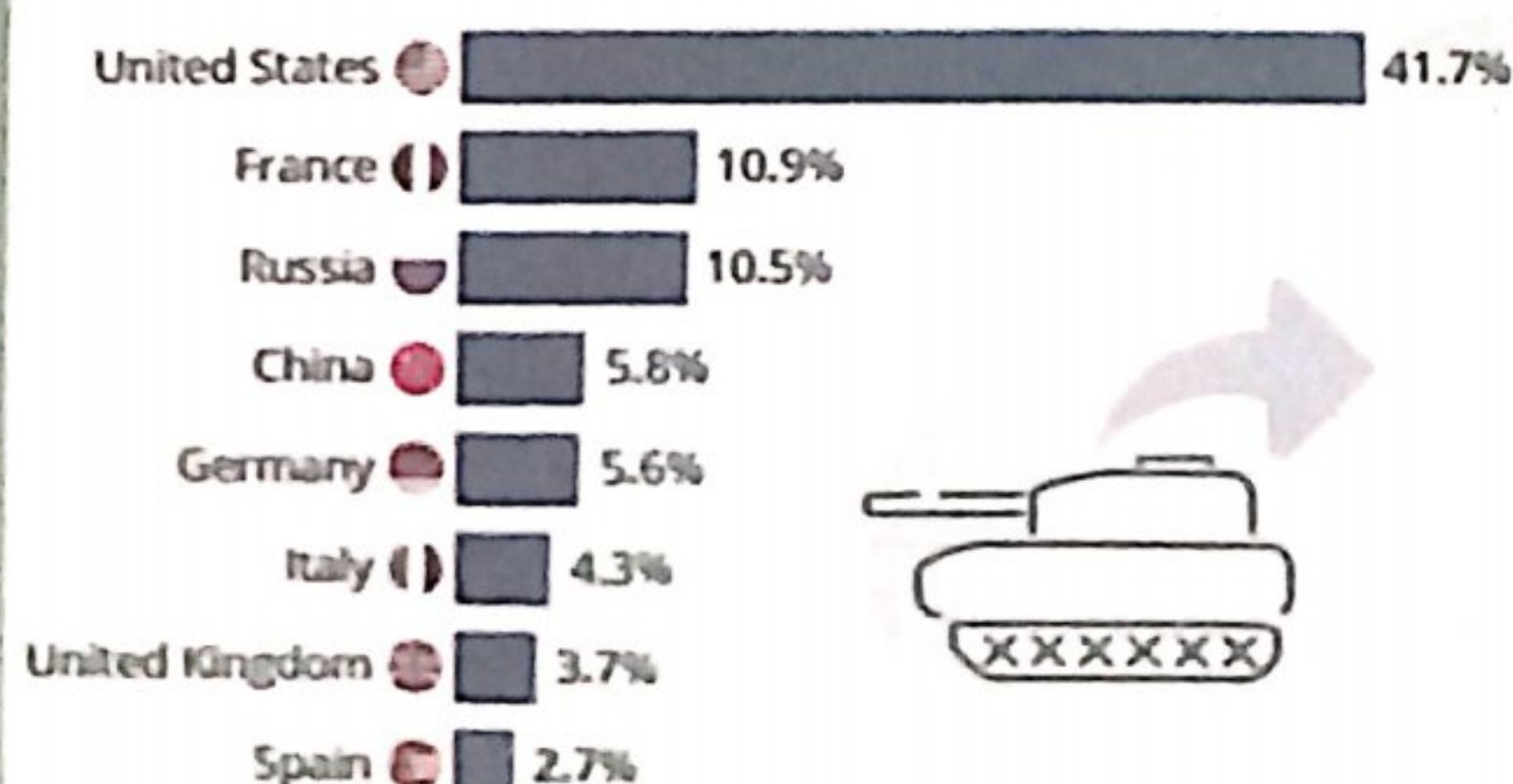
- Russia remained India's main supplier, but its share of Indian arms imports has shrunk from 76% in 2009–13 to 58% in 2014–18 and then to 36% in 2019–23.
- India has instead looked to Western suppliers, most notably France and the USA, and its own arms industry to meet its demand for major arms.

Arms imports by Pakistan grew by 43% between 2014–18 and 2019–23 and accounted for 4.3% of the world total, making it the fifth largest arms importer globally.

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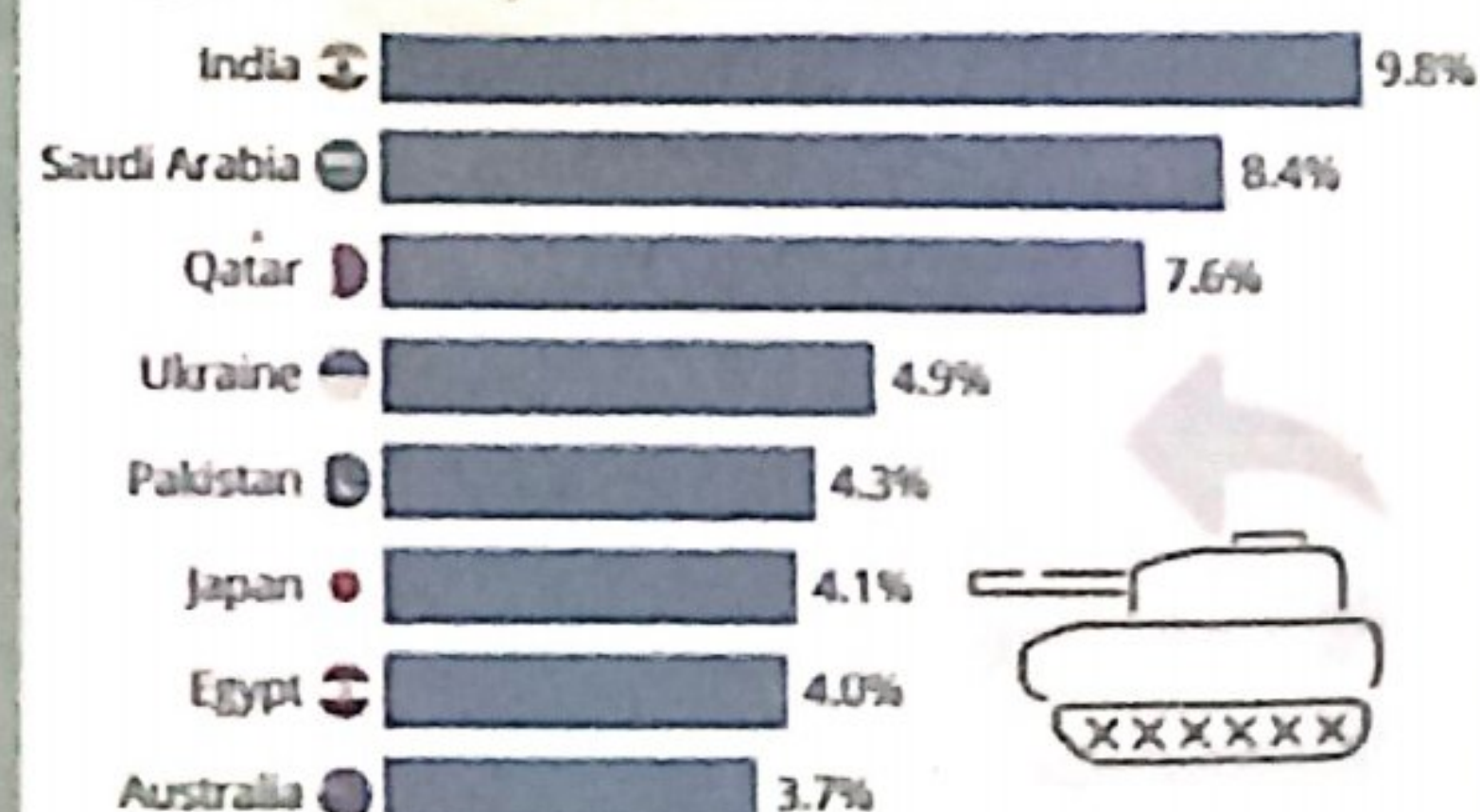
The World's Biggest Arms Exporters

Share of global arms exports from 2019 to 2023, by country



The World's Biggest Arms Importers

Countries responsible for the biggest shares of global arms imports from 2019–23



Kamran Adil
views about the age of consent, while the other school of thought hinges on the statutory law and the international law. Reflecting this divergence, in a judgement (titled Mst. Mumtaz Bibi case), Justice Babar Sattar of the Islamabad High Court ably analyzed the two schools of thought and declared, in essence, that irrespective of the species of law, i.e. criminal, civil, family and administrative, the age of consent to enter into a contract of marriage will be 18 years, and the defence of an accused in a criminal proceeding related to rape and sexual abuse (under sections 375 and 377-A of the Pakistan Penal Code) shall not be entertained. In his judgement, the honourable judge heavily relied on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), besides pinpointing the conflicts and discrepancies within different statutory instruments. On the other hand, Justice Ali Zia Bajwa of the Lahore High Court passed a judgement in

a case titled Nazar Muhammad case in which he relied on a Supreme Court judgement regarding the age of contracting marriage under Islamic Law and the consequences of a marriage (in which a girl is below 18 years of age) to hold that marriage/nikah is a defence against application of rape charges under Section 375 of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (PPC).

In line with the existing jurisprudence, he declared:

"In this regard, suffice to say that the sexual offence mentioned in Section 375 PPC cannot be equated with the consensual consummation of marriage with a legally wedded girl, who has attained puberty, though she has not attained the age of marriage provided under the Act of 1929."

From the perspective of policing and the application of criminal law, the two judgements take divergent positions and this point may finally be settled by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in future litigation. For investigation and trial purposes, the two views will affect the outcomes in Punjab and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). An Investigation Officer (IO) in the Punjab Police will have to decide as per the judgement of the Lahore High Court whereas the IO in the ICT will be bound by the judgement of the Islamabad High Court. The police organizations in other provinces may choose from one of these views to finalize their investigations. The trial courts will also be bound to follow their own High Courts in deciding whether to treat marriages/nikahs as valid, voidable or void and whether to extend the defence of marriage/nikah to an accused in a rape case.

Determination of age

In criminal cases of alleged rape and kidnapping/abduction in which there is a minor girl, the new mechanism - set in place through the executive order - requires the IOs of the Punjab Police to determine the age of the girl. For this, there is no enabling legal provision in the Anti-Rape

POLICING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

RAPES AND CHILD MARRIAGES

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Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) has many forms. One of its ugliest forms, prevalent in the Indian Subcontinent, is child marriage. More often than not, underage girls are married to men much older than them, and this act is justified on religious and social grounds. The underage marriages of girls are also a device for forced conversions to other religions. As the matter is justiciable and involves the enforcement of fundamental rights under the Constitution of Pakistan, it inundates the courts in different proceedings. Often, the judicial pronouncements are declaratory in nature and are restricted to the lis before the court. However, in the recent Shahid Imran case, the Lahore High Court has looked at the implementation aspects as well. To get the judgement of the Shahid Imran case implemented, Justice Anwaarul Haq Pannun of the Lahore High Court directed, on 28th February 2024, the Prosecutor General (PG) Punjab to hold a meeting in his office with the Inspector General of Police (or his representative) along with the Director General of Local Government and Community Development (DG, LG&CD) to evolve a comprehensive mechanism to give full effect to the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, and all the penal laws on the subject of underage marriages. In response, the PG Punjab held a meeting on 4th March 2024 and firmed up the roles of the police, prosecution and local government departments through an executive order. The exercise was useful as it synchronized state action and focused on the enforcement of the law.

Some select themes that were explored during the task merit mention here, as these are jurisprudential in their content and affect the justice system. These are:

The age of consent for marriage

The age of consent is a fundamental issue in family law, and many rights and duties flow from it. Views abound about the age of consent for marriage; one school of thought revolves around the religious discourse that has varying

NATIONAL

(Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021. So to bridge the gap and on the analogy of Section 8 of the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018, the Shahid Imran case requires police to determine the age of a girl in every investigation. The judgement has also reversed the earlier practice of according primacy to medical evidence in cases of determination of age and now requires that the documentary evidence be treated as the primary basis for age determination and to only resort to medical evidence in the absence of the documentary evidence. Relying on the documentary evidence is relatively easy for the police as compared to getting the medical evidence, which is not only time-consuming but also amenable to protracted processes as medical boards are often constituted in criminal cases that drag and prolong cases for a long time. The practice, if carried out earnestly, will provide an opportunity for the police to finalize the investigation at the earliest and to submit a report under Section 173 of the Cr.P.C. to the prosecution in due time.

Charging in the registration of a criminal case

The police register a criminal case in Pakistan by registering a First Information Report (FIR) under Section 154 of the Cr.P.C. The police, while registering the FIR, apply criminal charges. This charging by the police is often carried out in a discretionary manner. Often, the charges are either upgraded or downgraded by choosing to apply different laws. The charging by police affects the whole criminal justice system as the applicable law defines the rights of an accused qua his bail and also sets the forum/court. The charging in GBV cases is manipulated by the language of the application for registration of the FIR. If the language spells out a heinous offence, the charging is done on the higher side. More often than not, the drafting of an application is affected by the person in charge of a police station, i.e. the Station House Officer (SHO). After the establishment of the prosecution departments in all four provinces and at the federal level, there is good cause to restrict police only to recording information and to let the prosecution departments do the executive charging of criminal offences in GBV cases. This will streamline many an issue. Likewise, the final report under Section 173 of the Cr.P.C. should be submitted through the prosecutor instead of by the SHO, and for this, Section 173 of the Cr.P.C. may be suitably amended to enable interaction between the court and prosecution only.

Effect of the 18th Amendment on criminal laws

It may be noted that after the introduction of the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment in 2010, the Concurrent Legislative List enabling the federation and the provinces was abolished. The implication was that it resulted in more provincial legislative power, subject to the caveats of articles 142 and 143 of the Constitution that deal with criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence law and the prevalence of federal law over provincial law. Resultantly, the provinces enacted many laws that they deemed belonging to the provinces. In the context of the criminal law regarding the age of marriage, the Child Marriage



Restraint Act, 1929, which criminalizes underage marriages with specific age limits, was also provincialized and new laws were introduced by the Sindh and Punjab governments. The writ of the state is much dependent on the enforcement of the criminal law. This new provincialization of criminal laws intersecting with family laws needs to be addressed for certainty of law and to keep the system uniform throughout the country. Justice Ali Zia Bajwa did take note of the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2014, in the Nazar Muhammad case and noted that the law did not declare underage marriage void. While the Constitution does not bar the provinces from legislating criminal laws, it does, however, require that concurrent legislative competence be exercised as per articles 142 and 143 of the Constitution. If the tendency to enact criminal laws is not harmonized with the said provisions, it may lead to provincialization of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, as well, which is a penal law and is considered very dear to women's rights in Pakistan.

International law

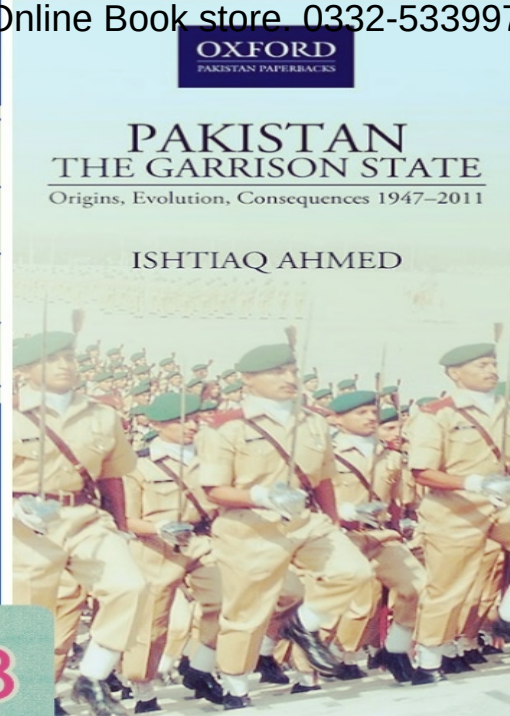
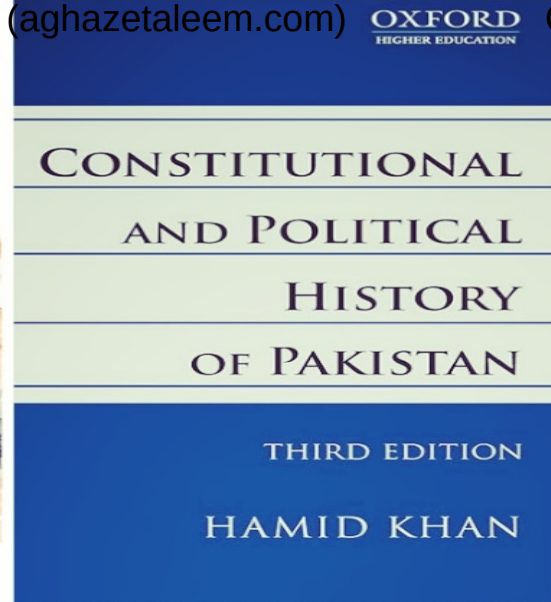
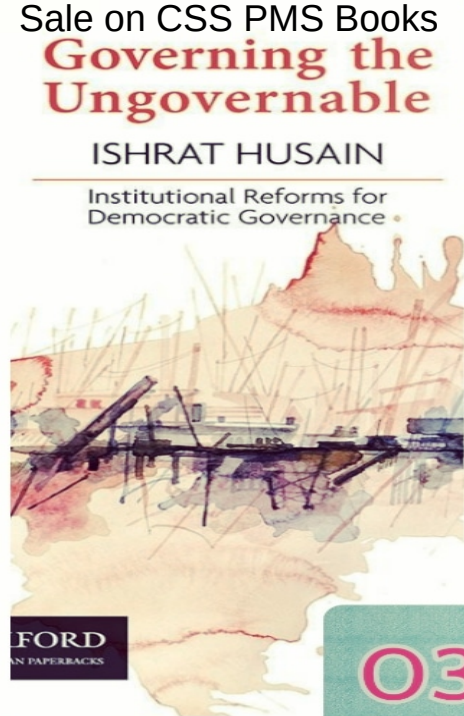
The impact of international law on municipal laws in Pakistan is increasing with every passing day; the impact is not intrusive but is consent-based. For

example, after the Government of Pakistan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), it consented to importing the age of a child into its legal system. Precisely, for this reason, Justice Babar Sattar of the Islamabad High Court opted to reason the Mst. Mumtaz Bibi case on international law, besides analyzing the municipal law.

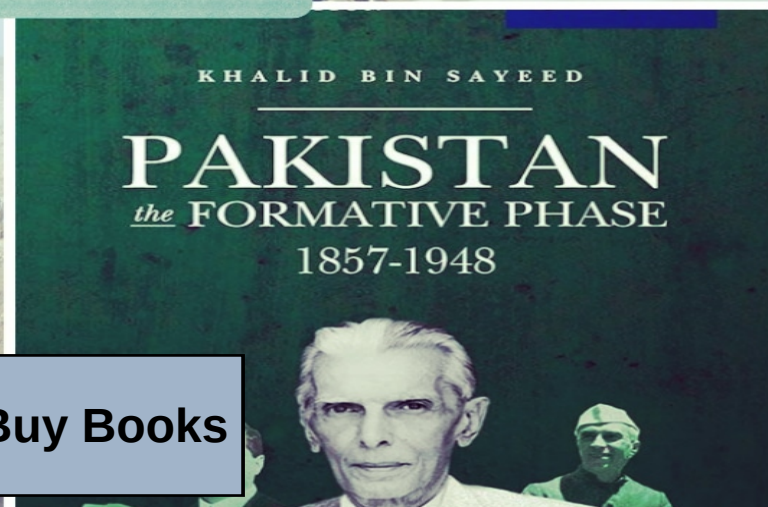
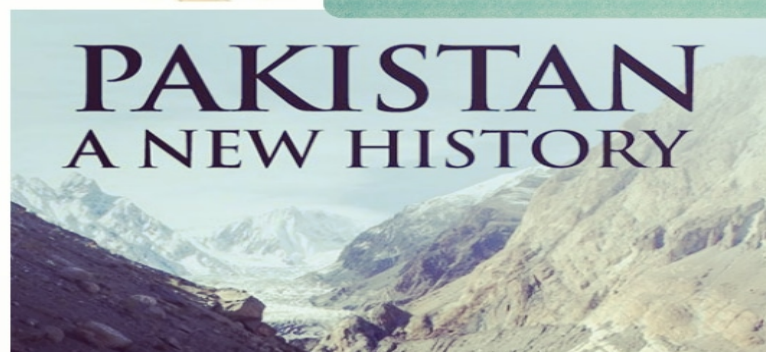
Way forward

Most of the problem-solving of the citizens of Pakistan is being done by the litigation-triggered delegated lawmaking by the executive. The gaps addressed by the executive order issued in compliance with the order of the Lahore High Court are likely to bring about qualitative changes in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of the underage girls' marriage cases. The propensity is gaining traction. A comparable example is the use of information technology in the justice sector. A Data Protection Standing Order under Article 10 of the Police Order, 2002, was issued by the Punjab Police to deal with litigation that threw a challenge to police powers to maintain records of criminals in databases. Justice Ali Zia Bajwa of the Lahore High Court, instead of striking down the whole system of record-keeping for want of dedicated legislation on the subject, disposed of the case as the police provided a transparent mechanism for data protection, rectifications and erasures (based on the EU's General Data Protection Regulation) under the broadly applicable law. It is hoped that further issues emanating from litigation will emulate the process to protect the citizens and provide better protection against GBV in the country. ■

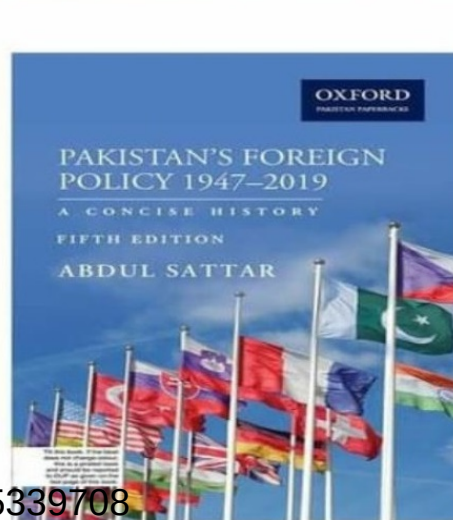
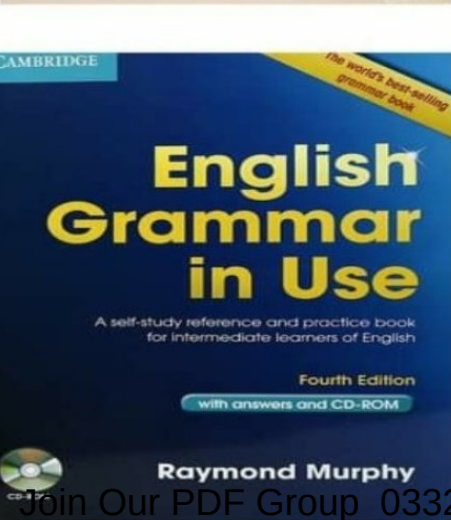
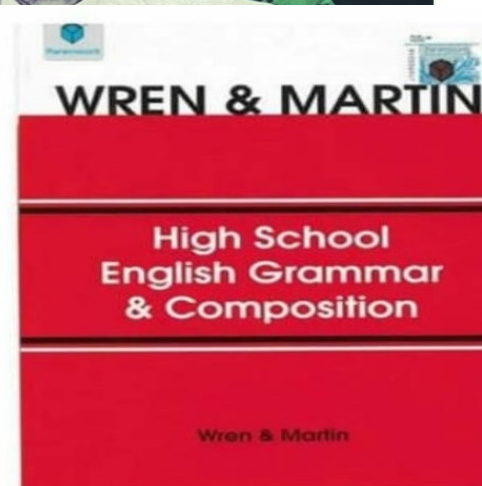
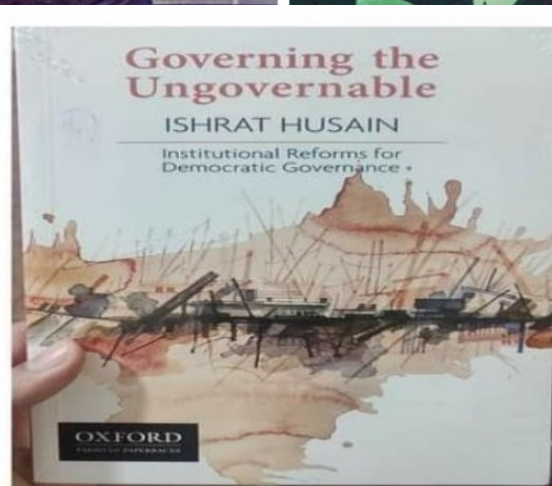
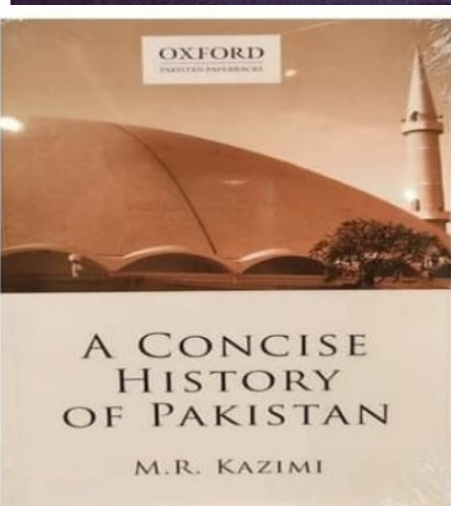
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Bilal Hassan



In the current socio-economic situation of Pakistan, the significance of tax revenue for balancing government budgets cannot be oversimplified, especially when sufficient sources for generating non-tax revenue are not available. It is for this reason that every government desires to optimize tax revenue through tax policy as well as enforcement measures. But such efforts, in the past, proved ineffective in raising tax-to-GDP ratio to the level of other similar economies. Tax-to-GDP ratio has remained below 10% for the last many years.

There are several reasons for this less-than-potential collection of tax revenue or, in other words, for tax evasion, in Pakistan. Here are some important of those:

1. Cash/undocumented economy

- ◆ In a cash-based economy, it is difficult for tax authorities to trace persons who have made commercial transactions. Therefore, such transactions easily escape taxation.
- ◆ If money invested or spent to meet expenses were traceable, tax authorities would impose tax on such money. This could be the reason why people in cash-based economies don't feel hesitation in evading taxes because of a lack of fear of getting caught owing to

Informal Economy

A substantial portion of economic activities in Pakistan occurs in the informal sector, where transactions are often conducted in cash. Cash is often preferred for transactions, including weddings, gifts, and charitable donations. This informal economy includes small businesses, street vendors, and agriculture, among others, which prefer cash transactions due to convenience and avoidance of taxes or regulations. Many people in Pakistan, especially in rural areas, have limited access to formal banking services. High taxation and complex regulations may incentivize businesses and individuals to engage in cash transactions to avoid detection and compliance burdens.

cash/undocumented economy.

2. Inefficiencies of tax administration

- ◆ A skilled and professionally competent tax administration is essential for enforcing tax laws in letter and spirit. To optimize tax revenue with minimum economic distortions, it is imperative to enforce tax laws on all sectors of the economy without any prejudice or discrimination.
- ◆ When tax authorities lack sufficient resources, they may struggle to effectively enforce tax laws and conduct audits. This can create opportunities for tax evasion without any fear of detection.
- ◆ Inefficient tax administration systems can be vulnerable to corruption and bribery, where taxpayers may attempt to bribe tax officials to overlook their tax obligations or provide favourable treatment.
- ◆ Corruption undermines the integrity of the tax system and facilitates tax evasion. Taxpayers may struggle to meet their tax obligations if they do not receive adequate assistance or support from tax authorities.
- ◆ Without clear guidance or resources, taxpayers may inadvertently fail to comply with tax laws, leading to evasion.
- ◆ Inefficient tax administration systems can impose high compliance costs on taxpayers, especially small businesses and individuals. When compliance costs are excessive, some taxpayers may choose to evade taxes rather than incur the time and expense of complying with complex requirements.

3. Lack of trust in tax administration/government

- ◆ When taxpayers perceive that the tax system is unfair or biased, they may be less inclined to voluntarily comply with their tax obligations.
- ◆ This perception can stem from various factors, such as unequal treatment of taxpayers, perceived favouritism towards certain groups or industries or corruption within the tax administration.

- ◊ If taxpayers lack confidence in the government's ability to manage tax revenues effectively or allocate funds responsibly, they may feel less motivated to contribute to the tax system.
- ◊ Scepticism about how tax revenues are used can erode taxpayers' willingness to pay taxes. Taxpayers are more likely to comply with tax laws when they believe that the benefits they receive from government services and public goods justify the taxes they pay.
- ◊ If taxpayers perceive that their tax dollars are being wasted or mismanaged, they may be less willing to contribute, leading to evasion.
- ◊ If taxpayers perceive the tax administration as inefficient, incompetent or unresponsive to their needs, they may be less motivated to comply with tax laws.
- ◊ Frustration with bureaucratic processes or delays in receiving services undermines trust in the tax system.
- ◊ Limited transparency in tax administration practices, such as opaque decision-making processes or a lack of access to information about tax policies and procedures, can fuel distrust among taxpayers.
- ◊ Transparency promotes accountability and helps build trust in government institutions.
- ◊ The perceived level of tax compliance among peers or within society can also influence individual behaviour. If taxpayers believe that others are evading taxes with impunity, they may feel justified in doing the same to avoid feeling disadvantaged or exploited.

4. Resource allocation is dictated by elites (Elite Capture)

- ◊ Elite capture can lead to preferential treatment for wealthy individuals and powerful corporations in tax enforcement. Tax authorities may focus their efforts on low-income individuals or small businesses, while allowing elites to evade taxes with impunity. This unequal enforcement undermines trust in the tax system and encourages tax evasion among those who feel unfairly targeted.
- ◊ When elites influence resource allocation within tax administration, it can lead to a lack of transparency and accountability in tax policies and enforcement practices.
- ◊ Taxpayers may perceive the tax system as biased or corrupt, eroding trust in government institutions and incentivizing tax evasion as a form of protest or resistance.
- ◊ Elite capture can result in weakened regulatory oversight of tax administration processes.
- ◊ Elites may influence the appointment of

key officials or decision-making bodies, leading to regulatory capture where regulatory agencies serve the interests of the elite rather than the public good.

- ◊ This can create loopholes and opportunities for tax evasion that benefit the elite at the expense of broader society.
- ◊ When resource allocation is dictated by elites, tax policies may disproportionately burden low-income individuals and small businesses while providing tax breaks and loopholes for the wealthy.
- ◊ This exacerbates income inequality and erodes trust in the fairness of the tax system, leading some individuals and businesses to engage in tax evasion as a means of avoiding what they perceive as an unjust tax burden.

5. Tax exemptions and tax concessions to selected individuals and sectors of the economy

- ◊ Tax exemptions and concessions create disparities in the tax burden, providing certain individuals or sectors with preferential treatment compared to others.
- ◊ This perceived unfairness can lead to resentment among those who do not benefit from the exemptions, potentially incentivizing tax evasion as a form of protest or resistance.
- ◊ Individuals and businesses may exploit tax exemptions and concessions to engage in aggressive tax planning strategies aimed at minimizing their tax liabilities.
- ◊ This can involve structuring transactions or operations in ways that take advantage of loopholes or ambiguities in the tax laws to legally reduce or eliminate taxes owed.
- ◊ While some tax planning may be legitimate, aggressive tax planning can push the boundaries of legality and increase the risk of evasion.
- ◊ Tax exemptions and concessions can weaken the deterrent effect of tax laws by signalling to taxpayers that certain activities or income sources are exempt from taxation or are subject to lower tax rates.
- ◊ This perception of leniency can embolden individuals and businesses to engage in tax evasion, knowing that the likelihood of detection and punishment may be lower for activities covered by exemptions or concessions.
- ◊ Tax exemptions and concessions can add complexity to the tax system, making it more difficult for tax authorities to enforce compliance and detect evasion.
- ◊ This complexity increases compliance costs for taxpayers, especially small businesses and individuals, who may struggle to navigate the intricacies of tax laws and regulations.

◊ Inadequate understanding of eligibility criteria or reporting requirements associated with exemptions and concessions can inadvertently lead to non-compliance or evasion.

- ◊ Excessive tax exemptions and concessions can distort economic incentives and lead to misallocation of resources, as individuals and businesses may prioritize activities or investments that qualify for tax benefits over more productive or socially beneficial endeavours.
- ◊ This misallocation of resources can undermine economic efficiency and reduce government revenue, necessitating higher tax rates or increased borrowing to finance public expenditures. ■

The writer studied Taxation Policy & Management at Keio University, Japan, and is serving as Additional Commissioner (Inland Revenue), Corporate Tax Office, Lahore.

TAX AVOIDANCE

VS

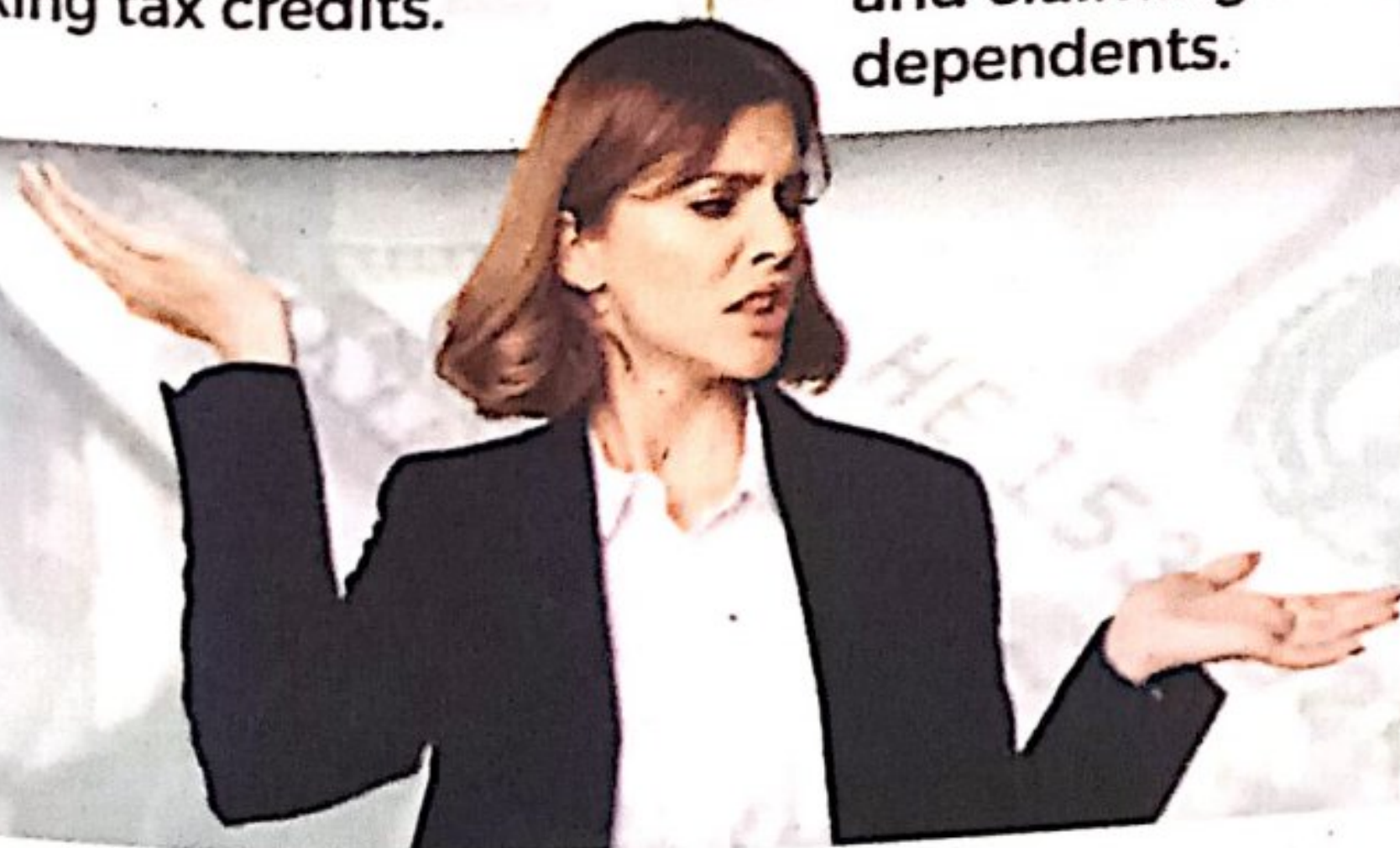
TAX EVASION

Minimizing of Taxes

Using legitimate tax deductions, setting up tax deferral plans, taking tax credits.

Not Paying Taxes

Not reporting income, reporting too many expenses, not paying taxes owed, and claiming fake dependents.



The 2024 elections are indeed a whiff of fresh air, as these have reinforced the people's trust in democracy as the system of governance most suitable in our country's pluralistic settings. However, in an already stalemated political culture in Pakistan, these elections have failed to ensure the formation of a strong government by the chosen representatives of the people. Allegations of rigging and an impression that a particular political party was sidelined to prevent it from making the government have marred this otherwise auspicious event. Although such allegations are not something new in Pakistan, the problem is that no solid mechanisms have been made to address this issue and ensure that people's truly chosen representatives hold the reins of

For the survival of its political and socio-economic system, Pakistan needs a strong federal government that has the ability to better deal with internal and external challenges. However, the experience of past many elections proves that no party in the country could get an absolute majority in the parliament, leading to the formation of coalition governments. But they have failed to make important decisions, which has resulted in the interference of non-democratic forces in the country's policymaking. The recent elections have further multiplied the uncertainty instead of bringing stability, which is not in the interest of the people and the country. They have also resulted in a coalition government, which, in effect, means that our search for political stability will remain elusive in the times to come. Experts fear that the law and order situation will further deteriorate and economic and political instability will increase. So, an important question here is: Is parliamentary democracy still the only way to bring about change in Pakistan?

the country.

Moreover, it is also true that this year's elections, like many before it, have resulted in a coalition government where a number of political parties will try to get their share of the pie but will pay less heed to addressing people's genuine grievances. But, when it comes to sharing the burden of tough decisions, small parties will try to avoid taking any sort of responsibility for the government's actions, as has happened in the past as well. So, these elections have made one thing clear: our current first-past-the-post (FPTP) system has failed to produce a truly representative government. As elections 2024 have failed to bring any strong government at the helm, what can be a viable alternative?

In my opinion, one way of minimizing corrupt practices in the elections is by switching to a

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

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A viable system for Pakistan

NEW SYSTEMS

proportional representation (PR) system, under which subgroups of an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body and all votes cast contribute to the result. This system, which is being successfully followed in many countries across the globe, can eliminate the attraction or incentives to constituency-based politicians to rig elections and minimize the chances of changing sides by elected representatives who win on the ticket of one party and favour in parliament the other. This will lead to the establishment of a true democracy in Pakistan. We have to recognize here that democracy is a soul that needs a body to live and thrive. The latest elections have reaffirmed our people's trust in and consensus on democracy. However, which form of governance system our democracy should have can be a moot point for our policymakers as well as the public at large. It is a settled principle of democracy that only that person or that party will rule, upon whom people place their trust via elections. The person sitting can be a President (as in the United States), a Prime Minister (as in Pakistan), or a Chancellor (as in Germany). The person who holds the reins of power merely represents the majority of the people. When the opinion of the people is respected, which is the cornerstone of democracy, then the opposition is also respected because a large number of people have voted for it, though it couldn't garner more votes than the winning side. The rule of majority does not, in any sense, mean that the interests of the minority can be ignored. The government has the responsibility to grant them their due rights as enunciated in the constitution of the country. Therefore, the real thing is the commitment to the principle that in a democracy, the opinion of the people is supreme.

Now, when it comes to electoral systems adopted in representative democracies, these are classified into two major categories:

1. Majoritarian or plurality system (single-winner system)

This system is based on two primary rules. First, every person can cast a single vote. Second, the aspirant getting the highest number of votes is declared the winner. The five most common types of this system are First-Past-The-Post (FPTP), Block Vote (BV), Alternative Vote (AV), Two-Round System (TRS), and Party Block Vote (PBV).

FPTP is the simplest electoral system. It divides the country into constituencies. Citizens vote for candidates who stand for their respective constituencies, instead of political parties. The system is employed in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Pakistan, India, and several other countries in the British Commonwealth.

In this method, the voters receive the ballot paper that contains the list of all the candidates from a particular constituency. The voters get to put a stamp/cross in front of their favourite candidate to choose the one they want to elect as their representative in the legislative assembly. The person who receives the most votes is elected. The system does not oblige the candidate to gain an

outright majority to be elected.

However, there are some flaws in this system. Usually, with this method, two big parties form the government. Most parties do not tend to make enough seats due to the fewer candidates elected. This system also tends to promote a "two or few" party system.

2. Proportional representation (multi-winner system)

The PR system, on the other hand, endeavours to establish a representative body that exhibits the overall distribution of public support for every political party. It is a system in which parties gain seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for them. For example, if $n\%$ of the electorate supports a particular political party as their favorite, then roughly $n\%$ of seats will be won by that party.

The most widely used families of PR electoral systems are party-list (PR), the single transferable vote (STV), and mixed-member proportional representation (MMPR).

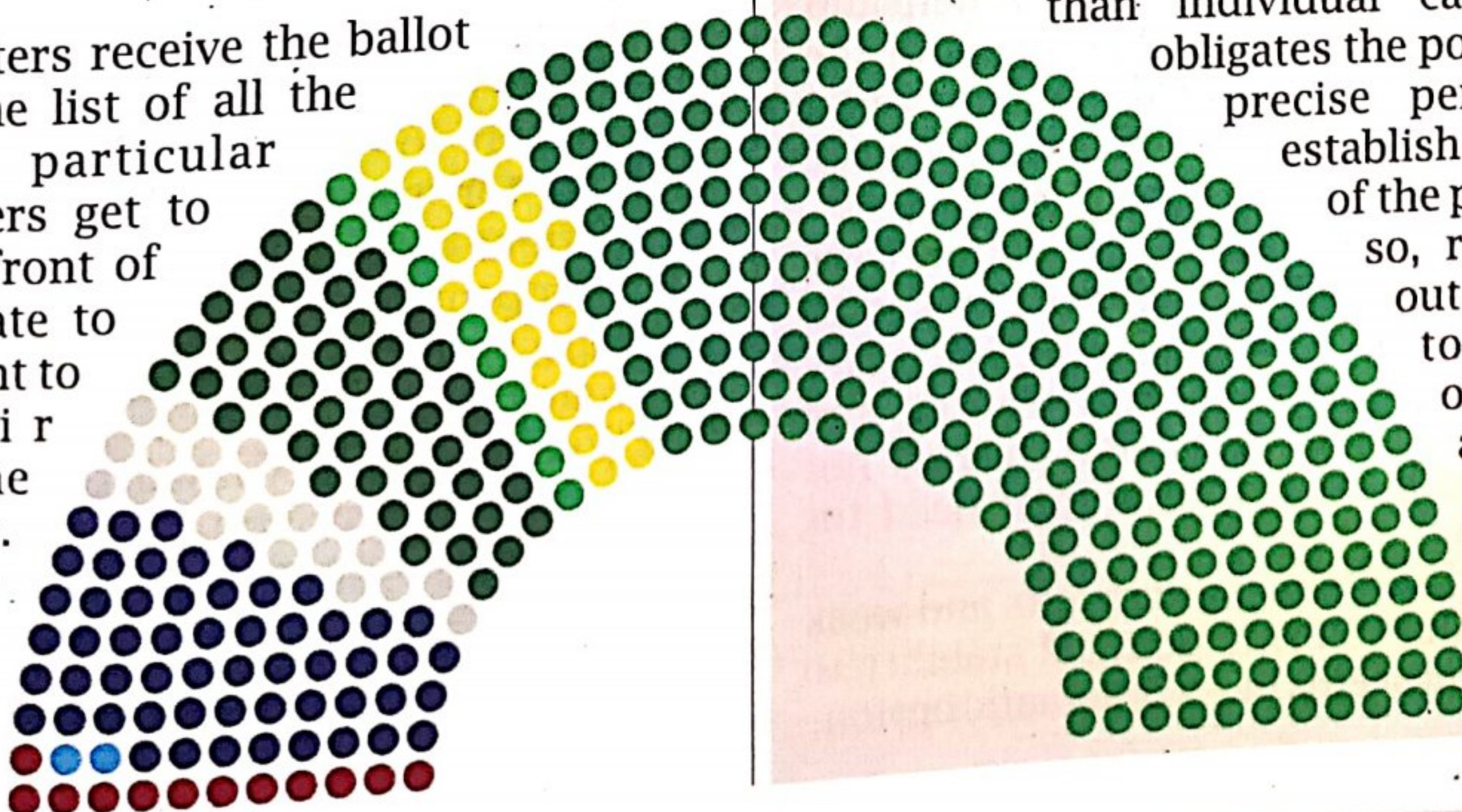
With party list PR, political parties define candidate lists and voters vote for a list. The relative vote for each list determines how many candidates from each list are actually elected. Lists can be "closed" or "open." Open lists allow voters to indicate individual candidate preferences and vote for independent candidates. Voting districts can be small (as few as three seats in some districts in Chile or Ireland) or as large as a province or an entire nation.

The single transferable vote uses multiple-member districts, with voters casting only one vote each but ranking individual candidates in order of preference (by providing backup preferences). During the count, as candidates are elected or eliminated, surplus or discarded votes that would otherwise be wasted are transferred to other candidates according to their preferences, forming consensus groups that elect surviving candidates. STV enables voters to vote across party lines, to choose the most preferred of a party's candidates, and to vote for independent candidates, knowing that if the candidate is not elected, his/her vote will likely not be wasted if the voter marks backup preferences on the ballot.

Mixed member proportional representation (MMP), also called the additional member system (AMS), is a two-tier mixed electoral system combining local non-proportional plurality/majoritarian elections and a compensatory regional or national party list PR election. Voters typically have two votes, one for their single-member district and one for the party list. The party list vote determines the balance of the parties in the elected body.

In this system, citizens vote for political parties rather than individual candidates. The system obligates the political parties to attain a precise percentage of votes to establish their government. If all of the political parties fail to do so, re-elections are carried out, which permits citizens to vote, recalling the outcomes of the prior attempt.

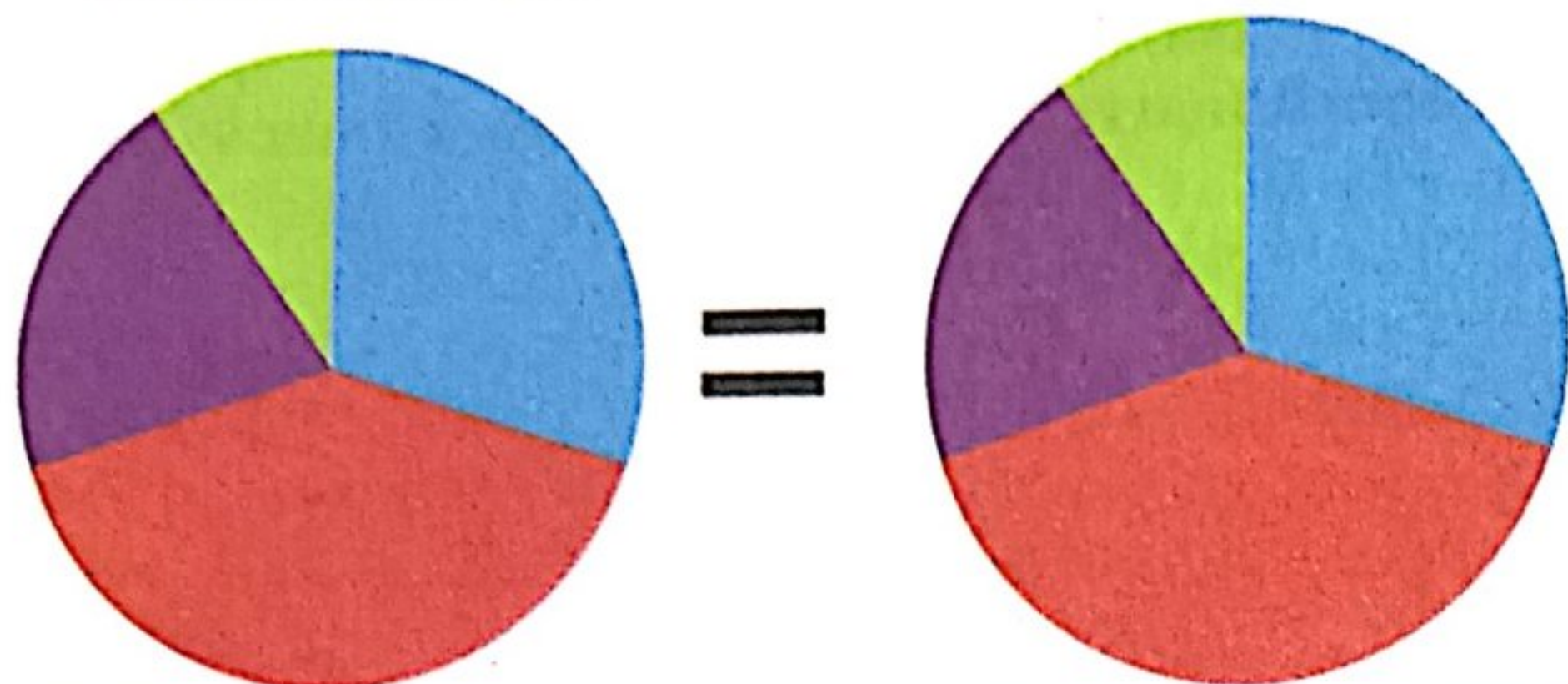
Such a system treats the entire country as one single constituency rather than dividing it into



Proportional representation

VOTER SUPPORT

SEATS IN PARLIAMENT



multiples. It is employed in several countries throughout the world, such as Finland, Denmark, Italy, Norway, Spain, Russia, Luxembourg, Brazil, Israel, etc.

Now, if we have a look at the 2013 and 2018 elections in Pakistan, we find that in the 2013 general elections, Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PMLN) established the government, receiving 32.77% of total votes. Similarly, in 2018, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) won the elections and formed the government by receiving the majority of votes, i.e. 31.82%. In both cases, over half of the country's population did not vote for these parties, yet they formed governments based on the majority. The system promotes the general will, not the will of all voters.

So, Pakistan's electoral history is a tale of evolving political consciousness, as evidenced by voter turnout oscillations. The dismally low 44 percent turnout in 2008, a manifestation of public scepticism, contrasted sharply with the more than 60 percent turnout in 2024, indicating perhaps improved faith in electoral politics. Despite this progress, significant challenges persist, especially in terms of transparency, trust, and inclusivity. Allegations of rigging and doubts cast over the impartiality of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) erode public confidence, undermining democracy's essence, limiting societal participation and putting the legitimacy of poll outcomes in question. In this state of affairs, the PR system can be a viable option for Pakistan to explore. And there are many reasons for it.

Pakistan, today, is steeped in economic, social and political challenges that need to be solved immediately - but this will not be possible except when a strong and stable government is in power that has the support of the people and the powerful establishment. Pakistan is heavily dependent on foreign assistance and the need of the hour is to stabilise socially and politically so that international investors and lenders can feel confident and safe about their investments. But, the final result of the 2024 elections is that there is a divided mandate and a hung parliament. No single party could gain the required strength to form a government at the federal level.

It must be admitted that the hopes of the nation were resting on this election. The common citizens looked to these elections as a means to usher in political stability and bring an end to the severe polarization and uncertainties that the system faces. But it has not happened, and we are still faced with a great need for reconciliation and healing.

To break this vicious cycle of hung parliaments and weak coalition governments and to bring political stability to the country, the PR system seems like a pragmatic option.

To improve governance in Pakistan, electoral reforms are necessary, with the introduction of the PR system as a first step. While, on its own, it won't resolve all governance issues, it would still be a move in the right direction, as one of the meanings of PR is that votes should be given to parties rather than individuals. People should vote for the PML-N, PTI, PPP, Jamaat-e-Islami or whichever party they like. These votes will be counted and on the basis of the final counting, the seats in parliament will be given. A minimum number can be set; for example, only that party will be given representation that garners at least 5% of the total votes cast. There are four obvious benefits to this.

Leaders will focus on the organization of political parties rather than individuals. The common voter will also have some sort of attachment to the party and its manifesto. Then, the parties will work on their manifestos and the people will be called to vote for an ideology or program, instead of individuals.

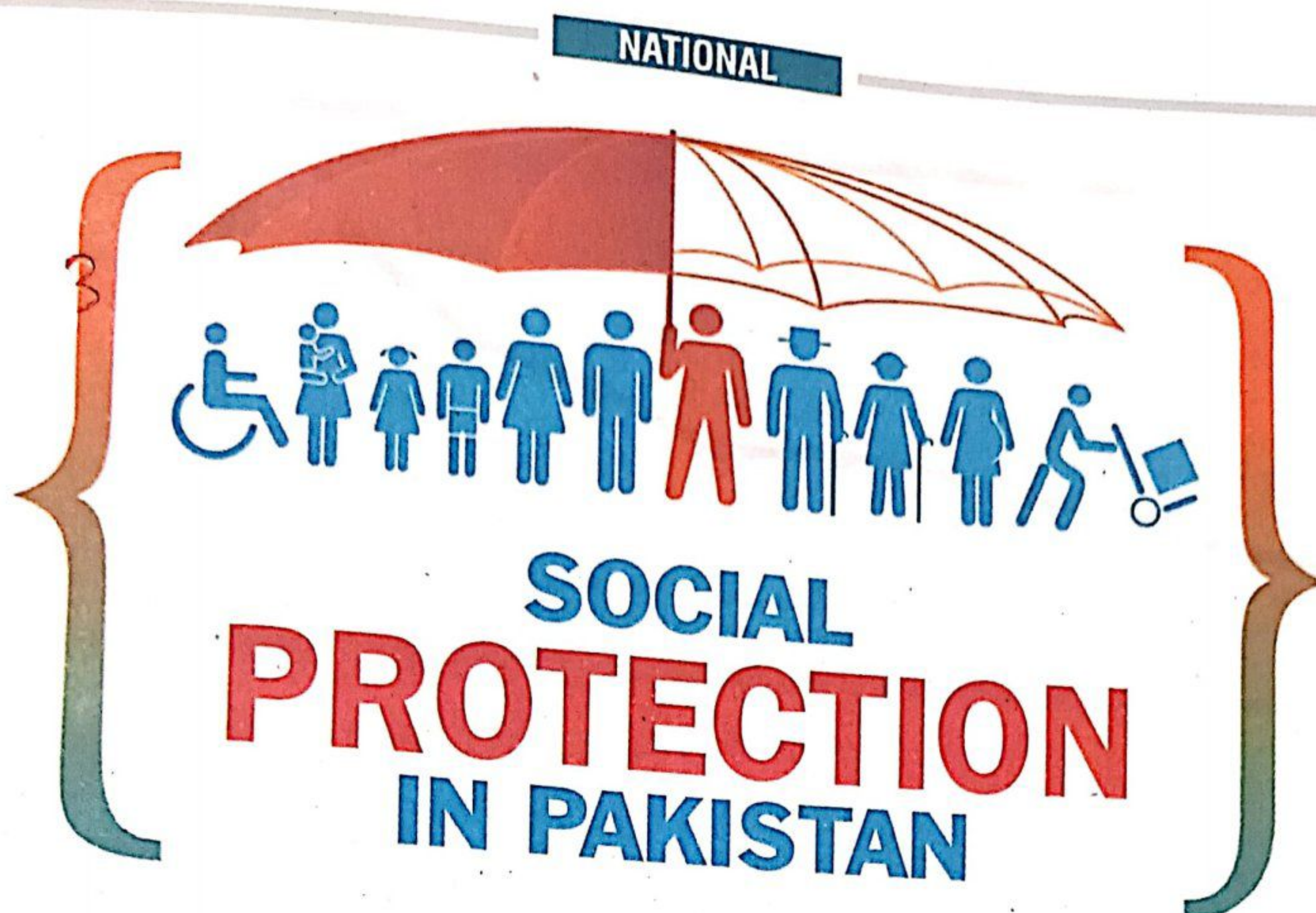
The charm of the electables will be lost and they will no longer be able to blackmail political parties. Parties will also be able to get talented people into parliament.

When political parties are in the field with their manifestos, it will also greatly reduce election expenses and increase the chances of coming forward for talented people who are left behind due to a lack of resources. There are many political parties in the country whose candidates do not have enough resources to compete with other parties in this field. It can also benefit the PTI, which is a party that gathers around one individual. This system can be beneficial for parties such as the PPP and the PML-N, which traditionally rely on electables, as they will have to change their style of politics and make people the center of their focus, not the electables.

Pakistan's current electoral system, though efficient, often omits minority and smaller-party voices. In our current system, it is possible that a party with fewer votes takes more seats while the more popular party gets fewer. Proportional representation will resolve this issue, as the number of seats will be determined by the number of votes they get. In our current FPTP system, we often see that the winner has only a few hundred or a few thousand votes compared to the runner-up; for example, for the 2024 election in NA 148 constituency, the winner, Yousaf Raza Gillani, got 67,326 votes, while the runner-up, Taimur Malik, could get 67,033 votes - a minor difference of 293 votes. Is it democracy to deny representation to such a large number of people who voted for the runner-up? All votes will be counted in the PR system. Their votes will go to their party's account and thus their votes will not be lost.

We have to find an alternative path to bringing political stability to Pakistan. In view of the 2024 election results, it is necessary to critically review the current FPTP system and go for the principle of PR, though with some restrictions on political parties, as it will lead to the entry of better people into the assemblies. So far, there has been little discussion in the media as to why the current system has failed to deliver results. Only the transparency of the elections is being discussed. I think the problem lies in the structure of the system. It needs to be solved. It must be debated and alternatives such as PR must be considered. ■

The writer is a Lahore-based academician and political analyst.



In January this year, the IMF urged Pakistan to run a social programme for the poor people, in addition to the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). IMF advised Pakistan to take more social security measures for the weaker sections and make continuous efforts to run social programmes. The global lender urged the new government to continue social security spending until the end of the financial year. Pakistan has a high poverty rate, with approximately 24.3% of the population living below the poverty line. The country also has one of the highest rates of income inequality in the world, with the top 10% of the population holding 67% of the wealth. In this state of affairs the IMF's advice should be earnestly heeded to and our policymakers should devise pragmatic policies so as to extend social protection to the maximum number of Pakistanis.

Governments have the primary responsibility of providing social protection to their citizens. It is the only way to facilitate marginalized and vulnerable segments of society through public interventions and collective efforts to improve their standard of living and resilience against risks and vulnerabilities. The idea of social protection relates to

Dr. Sidra Muqet the concept of a welfare state, which is why governments around the world make budgetary allocations for this purpose every year. The realization by countries that government intervention is required to provide a decent standard of living to their citizens and ensure inclusive growth has made social protection programs an integral part of socio-economic develop-

Social Protection

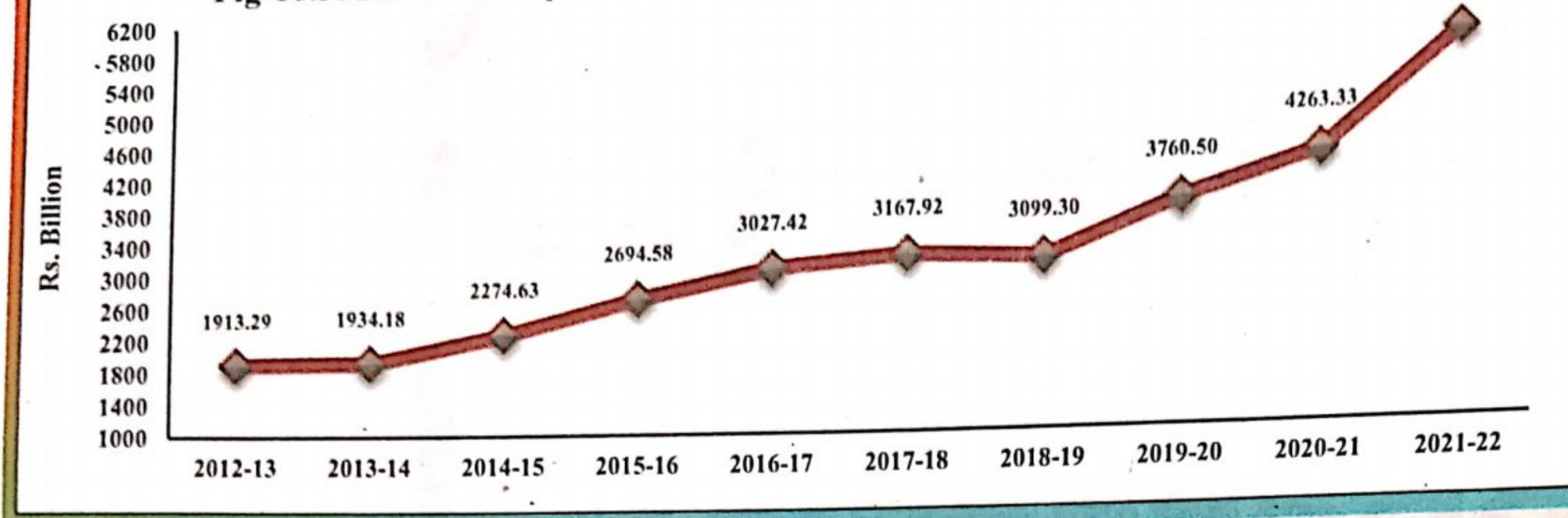
Human Development Index and its Components

Country/ Region	HDI Rank	Human Development Index (HDI) Value (2021)	Average Annual HDI Growth (%) [1990-2021]	Life Expectancy at Birth (years)	Expected Years of Schooling (years)	Mean Years of Schooling (years)	Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (2017 PPP \$)	Multidimensional Poverty Index Headcount (%)
				SDG-3	SDG-4.3	SDG-4.4	SDG-8.5	SDG-1.2
World	-	0.732	0.64	71.4	12.8	8.6	16,752	-
South Asia	-	0.632	1.16	67.9	11.6	6.7	6,481	29.0
Sri Lanka	73	0.782	0.67	76.4	14.1	10.8	12,578	2.9
Iran	76	0.774	0.82	73.9	14.6	10.6	13,001	-
China	79	0.768	1.50	78.2	14.2	7.6	17,504	3.9
Maldives	90	0.747	-	79.9	12.6	7.3	15,448	0.8
Bhutan	127	0.666	-	71.8	13.2	5.2	9,438	-
Bangladesh	129	0.661	1.66	72.4	12.4	7.4	5,472	24.6
India	132	0.633	1.22	67.2	11.9	6.7	6,590	27.9
Nepal	143	0.602	1.34	68.4	12.9	5.1	3,877	17.5
Pakistan	161	0.544	1.00	66.1	8.7	4.5	4,624	38.3
Afghanistan	180	0.478	1.82	62.0	10.3	3.0	1,824	55.9

Source: UNDP Human Development Report-2022

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Fig-16.3: Pro-Poor Expenditures



the Asia-Pacific and 4.3 percent in Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, social security coverage ranges from five percent to 10 percent of the population. Middle-income countries have social security coverage ranging from 20 percent to 60 percent of their respective populations, whereas in developed countries the coverage is nearly 100 percent. In the Asia-Pacific, social security schemes cover

ment. Pakistan falls among those few developing countries whose constitution delineates social security as the civil right of every citizen. As indicated in Article 38 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, it's the responsibility of the state to provide social security. Other basic amenities include housing, clothing, food, medical relief and education to be provided irrespective of caste or race, creed and sex.

In order to ensure basic livelihood standards for all citizens, developed countries started promoting social assistance and social insurance programs in the beginning of 20th century. Developing nations followed this lead and despite their limited resources, they have been trying to provide relief to their citizens through various social protection initiatives. But, there is still a huge gap across regions and countries with respect to budgetary allocations and coverage of population.

Europe has the highest level of social security expenditure (nearly 25 percent of its GDP), followed by 21 percent in OECD, 16.6 percent in North America, seven percent in

44.1 percent of the total population of the region. Neighbouring countries are ahead of Pakistan with respect to the coverage of people under social security. China has medical insurance coverage for 95 percent of its population, whereas India and Bangladesh have 24.4 percent and 28.4 percent, respectively, of their populations under their social security nets. But Pakistan has a paltry 20 percent of its population under different kinds of social security programs.

Why Pakistan lags?

Pakistan has remained prone to a series of challenges, e.g. economic crises, political instability, natural calamities (floods, pests' attacks, earthquakes), etc. which exacerbate the vulnerabilities of the poor segments. Furthermore, the process of structural adjustment under the IMF programme to stabilize the economy through steep reductions in fiscal and current account deficits has caused tax hikes (especially on consumption), cutbacks in public expenditure (particularly on development and social services) and the

BISP Financial Achievements

(Rs in billion)

Year	Released	Funds Transfer to Cash Grants			Number of Beneficiaries (million)
		Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT)	Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT)	Total (UCT+CCT)	
2008-09	15.32	0.04	15.81	15.85	1.76
2009-10	39.94	2.89	31.94	34.83	2.58
2010-11	34.42	5.30	29.66	34.96	3.10
2011-12	49.53	4.28	41.60	45.88	3.68
2012-13	50.10	3.17	43.30	46.47	3.75
2013-14	69.62	1.20	65.11	66.31	3.64
2014-15	91.78	0.45	88.59	89.04	5.05
2015-16	102.00	1.88	96.65	98.53	5.21
2016-17	111.50	2.27	102.10	104.37	5.46
2017-18	107.00	3.20	99.00	102.20	5.63
2018-19	116.50	4.01	104.60	108.61	5.78
2019-20	243.71	3.70	228.67	232.37	9.10
2020-21	194.29	5.57	169.40	174.97	7.06
2021-22	235.63	25.35	193.74	219.09	7.74
2022-23*	312.39	23.48	241.94	265.42	9.00
Total	1,773.73	86.79	1,552.11	1,638.90	-

*Till 31st March, 2023

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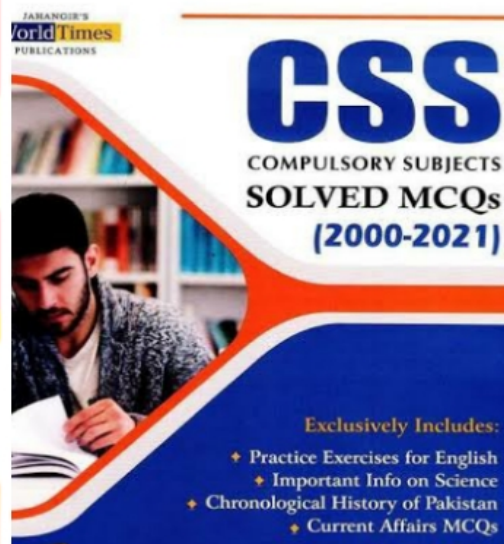


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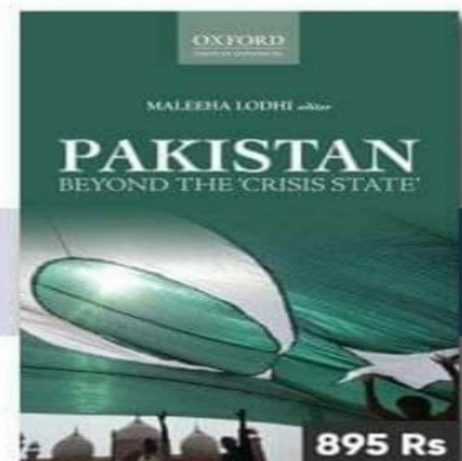
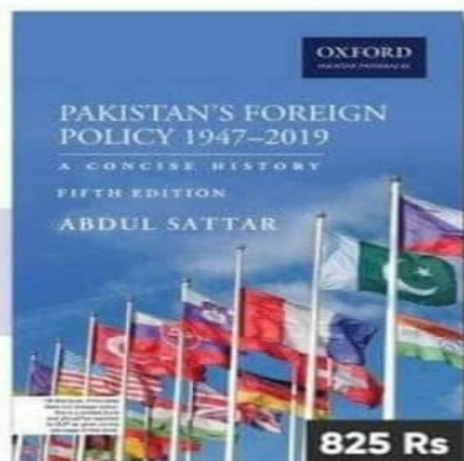
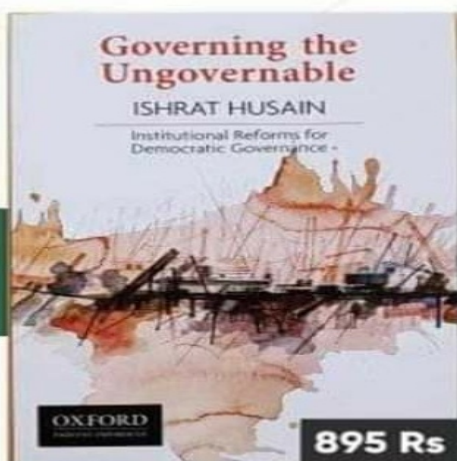
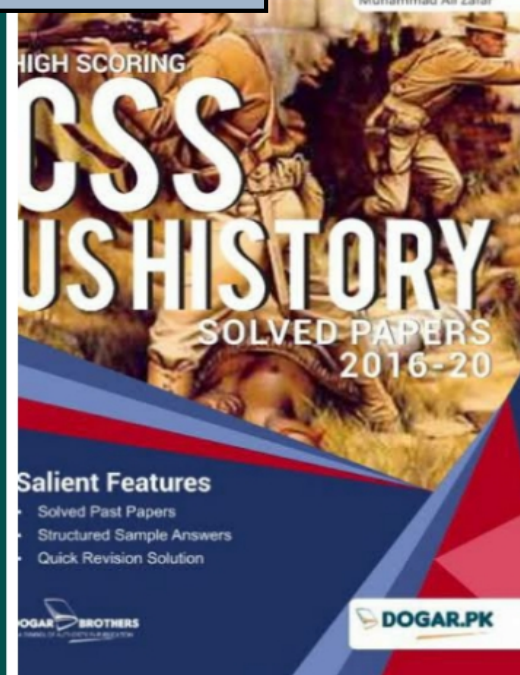
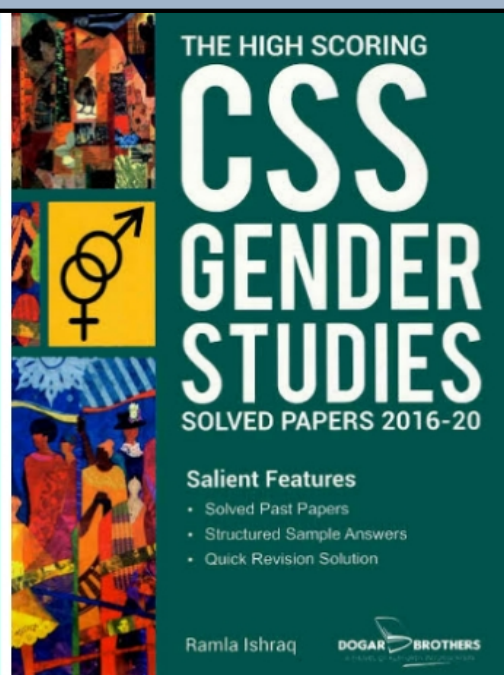
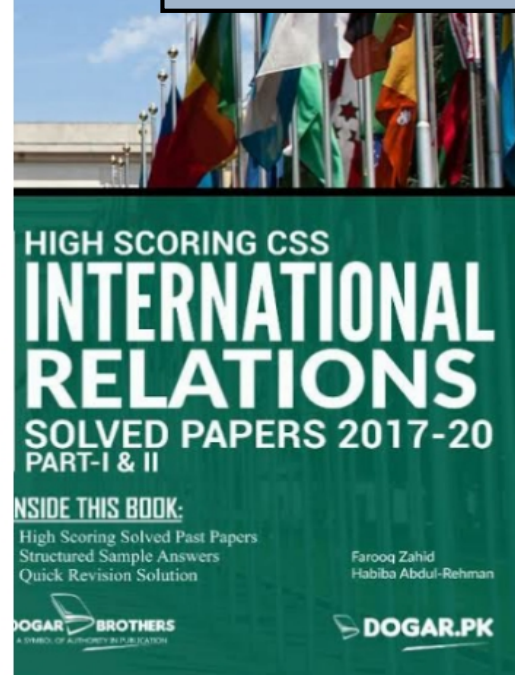
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Contents



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Governing The Ungovernable

Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2019

Pakistan Beyond The Crisis State

Disbursement of Zakat

Federal Areas/ Provinces	Amount (Rs million)
Punjab	5,782.24
Sindh	738.95
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	994.94
Balochistan	1,399.35
Gilgit-Baltistan	730.45
ICT	1,171.73
Total	10,817.67

Source: Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety

phasing out of food subsidies (for example, on wheat). It has led to a depreciation in the exchange rate and enhanced tariffs on public utilities such as power and gas. All these adjustments reduce economic opportunities and increase the cost of living, which further lowers the living standards of poor people.

Efforts such as the BISP aim to safeguard the underprivileged, while subsidies aim to shield the masses and the economy from the shock of rising food and energy prices. However, citizens are facing more difficulties, with rising poverty rates and stagnant per capita income over the past many years.

The successive governments purposefully ramped up spending on subsidies and social protection programmes in pursuit of a stronger social welfare system. In recent years, allocations for subsidies, BISP, and social protection have surged, averaging 14.2% of the federal government's expenditure.

The trajectory depicts a clear increase: it began at 5.9% in 2019, doubled for the following two years, and peaked at an unprecedented 23% in 2022.

The effectiveness of these policies remains in question.

While correlation isn't causation, one must question why poverty reduction has reversed despite a greater focus on social welfare and subsidies?

The primary driver behind the resurgence of poverty has been the unexpected surge in inflation. The surge has had far-reaching implications on the overall cost of living, impacting the populace at large.

However, the middle class and impoverished citizens are the most affected, as their real incomes diminish and fail to keep pace with the inflationary pressures. The runaway inflation has rendered basic necessities prohibitively expensive, resulting in an estimated 20 million people slipping into poverty - a stark contrast to declining poverty rates in previous years.

The government attributes high inflation to the international commodity super cycle; however, this claim is

untrue. Other countries in the region haven't witnessed such a spike in inflation. This is because inflation is inherently a local phenomenon shaped by local policy decisions.

At its core, fiscal indiscipline stands as the root cause. The surge in subsidies amid growing fiscal imprudence and record deficits is not without repercussions. The government finds itself in a net borrowing position, with soaring debt levels nearing the point of unsustainability. Financing the escalating fiscal deficits through bank borrowings has fuelled the expansion of the monetary base, contributing significantly to the inflation rate, which peaked at an alarming 38%.

Contrary to their intended purpose, substantial subsidies have negatively impacted the economic landscape by distorting the price system. The resulting adjustments are considerably more painful and less subtle.

While broad subsidies lack merit, there is a case for a targeted programme like BISP. However, it demands a more deliberate and focused strategy with clear milestones to uplift families from poverty within specified timeframes and the establishment of performance metrics to gauge progress.

There's a necessity to transition away from providing indefinite monthly stipends and to measure progress not solely based on the number of beneficiaries and total cash disbursed.

While there is much rhetoric advocating for the continuation of subsidies and the expansion of social protection, these measures rarely assist people in breaking out of the poverty cycle. This is evident in recent years despite a focus on welfare policies.

It's apparent that the current approach falls short, especially considering Pakistan's consistent reduction in poverty rates over the previous decade with relatively modest subsidies and safety nets. The unintended consequences - high inflation and a reversal in poverty reduction - underscore the necessity for a more balanced and sustainable strategy.

The best way forward is for the government to stop fuelling inflation. It needs to prioritise fiscal prudence across its expenditure spectrum, which involves enhancing the efficiency of public spending, reducing the government's footprint, phasing out subsidies, and establishing clear milestones to limit welfare spending.

In essence, creating a supportive business environment and expanding employment opportunities through growth stand as viable means to alleviate poverty. Prioritising fiscal responsibility and nurturing economic growth are crucial steps towards reorienting Pakistan's course for effective poverty alleviation. Moreover, the social protection programs need to be properly monitored and evaluated for assessing their impact on poverty and vulnerability, economic growth, and public welfare. ■

The writer is a CSS aspirant.

What is Social Protection?

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) describes social protection as 'the mix of policies and programmes aimed at reducing poverty and vulnerability for individuals unable to work owing to chronic illness, permanent disabilities or old age, and to protect the majority of the population against some of the unexpected downturns of life (sickness, unemployment, depth of breadwinner, etc.).

According to Asian Development Bank (ADB), "Social protection consists of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing people's exposure to risk, enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income."



Pakistan's conventional society is characterized by rich cultural traditions, strong familial bonds and communal values. Family gatherings and social events hold significant importance, serving as occasions for fostering connections and upholding traditions. Respect for elders, hospitality and community cohesion are deeply ingrained in the fabric of society. Hierarchical structures within families and communities contribute to maintaining order and stability. However, this traditional societal framework also contends with challenges such as gender inequality, limited access to education and healthcare and socioeconomic disparities.

In recent years, technology has emerged as a powerful force, reshaping every aspect of Pakistani society. The proliferation of mobile technology, particularly smartphones, has ushered in an era of unprecedented connectivity. Access to the internet has become widespread, bridging geographical divides and

also raised concerns about the integrity of political processes. Technology has catalyzed economic growth and innovation in Pakistan. The rise of e-commerce platforms has created new avenues for entrepreneurship and job creation. Digital payment systems have facilitated financial inclusion, enabling individuals and businesses to transact securely and efficiently. Furthermore, technology-driven industries, such as IT and software development, have emerged as

Navigating Tradition and Transformation

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Pakistan's Tech Revolution

key drivers of economic growth, attracting investment and creating employment opportunities. However, challenges, such as digital inequality and cyber security threats, do persist, hindering the full realization of technology's economic potential.

Technology has had a profound impact on Pakistani culture, influencing lifestyle choices, social norms and cultural practices. The widespread adoption of social media has led to the emergence of new forms of cultural expression and identity formation. For example,

many online platforms have provided individuals with opportunities to showcase their creativity and talent to a global audience. However, concerns have been raised about the homogenization of culture and the erosion of traditional values in the face of globalization and technological advancement.

Technology has revolutionized the education landscape in Pakistan, expanding access to learning resources and enhancing educational outcomes. E-learning platforms and online courses have democratized education, allowing students to pursue their studies remotely and at their own pace. Virtual classrooms and digital learning tools have enriched the learning experience, making education more interactive and engaging. However, disparities in access to technology and digital literacy skills remain significant barriers to educational equity, exacerbating existing inequalities.

To harness the positive impact of technology and

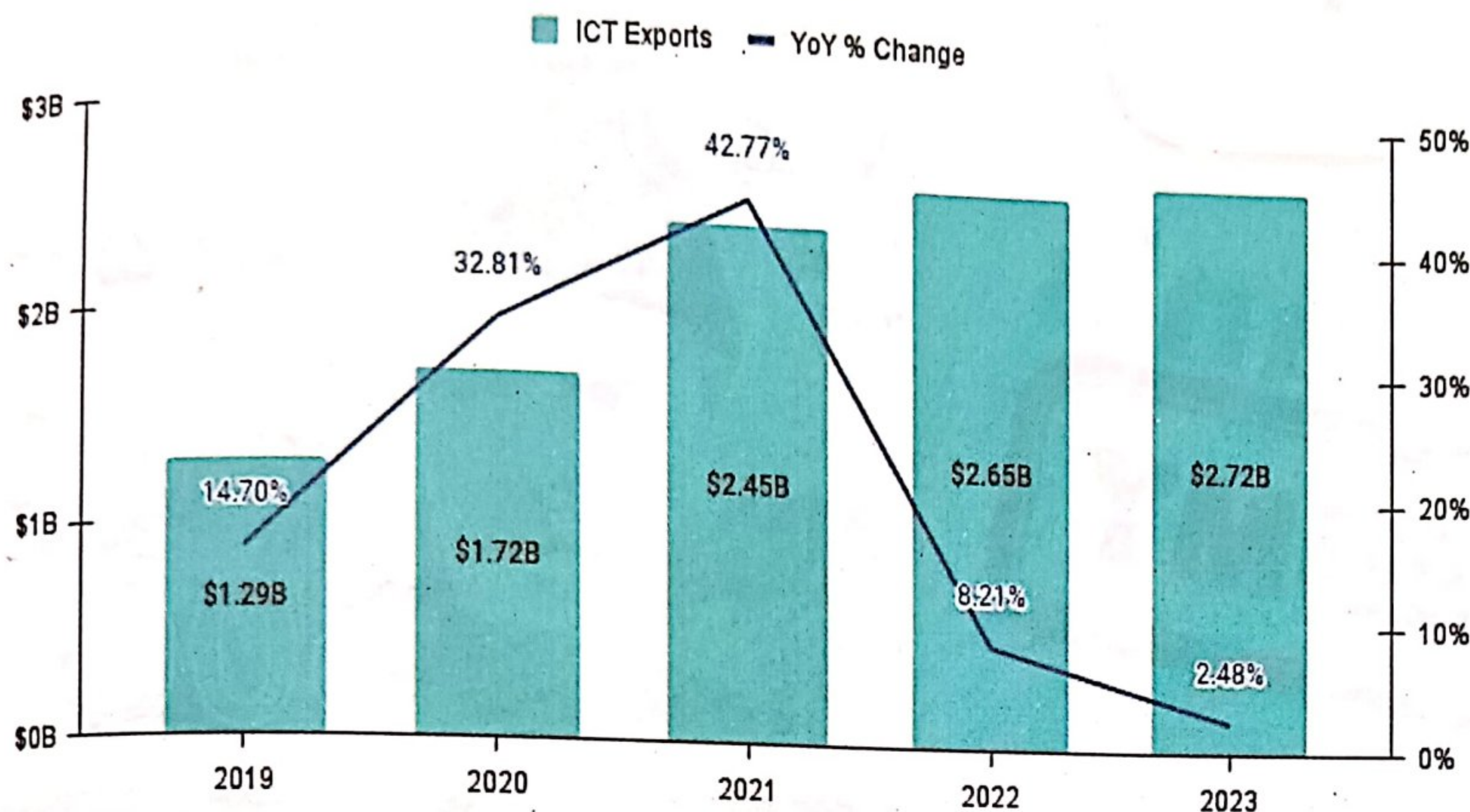
democratizing access to information. Social media platforms have revolutionized communication patterns, enabling rapid dissemination of information and facilitating social activism. Additionally, e-commerce platforms and food delivery services have transformed consumer behaviour, offering convenience and accessibility like never before.

The impact of technology on various sectors of Pakistani society is profound and far-reaching. Technology has played a significant role in shaping political discourse and enhancing participation in Pakistan. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for political mobilization, enabling citizens to voice their opinions, organize protests and engage with political representatives. For example, the use of social media during political campaigns has become ubiquitous, with political parties leveraging online platforms to reach a wider audience and mobilize supporters. However, the spread of misinformation and fake news on these platforms has

mitigate its negative consequences, policymakers in Pakistan must prioritize a comprehensive set of strategies. Firstly, investing in digital infrastructure and broadband connectivity is crucial to ensuring universal access to technology across all regions of the country. By expanding access to high-speed internet and digital services, policymakers can bridge the digital divide and

promote inclusive growth. Secondly, promoting digital literacy and cyber security education initiatives is essential to equipping citizens with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the digital landscape safely and responsibly. By providing training programs and educational resources, policymakers can empower individuals to protect their

ICT exports have started to flatline



Source: State Bank of Pakistan

privacy, recognize online threats, and make informed decisions in the digital realm.

Thirdly, implementing regulatory frameworks is imperative to address issues such as data privacy, online harassment, and misinformation. By enacting laws and regulations that safeguard the rights and well-being of individuals online, policymakers can create a safer and more secure digital environment for all citizens.

Fourthly, fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors is essential to driving innovation and entrepreneurship in technology-driven

industries. By collaborating with industry stakeholders, policymakers can leverage expertise and resources to accelerate technological innovation, foster economic growth, and create job opportunities.

Lastly, encouraging the integration of technology into educational curricula and pedagogical practices is vital to enhance learning outcomes and prepare students for the digital age. By incorporating digital tools and resources into classrooms, policymakers can ensure that students develop the skills and competencies needed to thrive in a technology-driven world. Overall, by adopting these strategies, policymakers in Pakistan can harness the transformative power of technology to drive positive social change and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

By embracing a comprehensive strategy that harmonizes technological progress with societal welfare, Pakistan stands poised to harness the complete capabilities of technology, thus propelling the nation towards inclusive development and profound societal change. This holistic approach entails not only leveraging the advantages that technology offers but also addressing the challenges it poses, ensuring that the benefits are equitably distributed across society. Through initiatives promoting digital literacy, ethical usage and accessibility, Pakistan can empower its citizens to navigate the digital landscape effectively, fostering a more connected, prosperous and equitable society for all. ■

The writer is the Director of the Institute of Humanities and Art, Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan.

AGRI-TECH

Agri-tech is crucial to enhance productivity, efficiency, and sustainability in the sector of agriculture such as food security, environmental sustainability, and increasing demand for agricultural products. Integration of technology in agriculture continues to evolve, offering new opportunities for innovation and improvement in farming practices. It also emphasizes the adoption of waste-to-product and waste-to-energy approaches to reduce environmental impact

SMART-TECH

Smart-tech plays a pivotal role in modern society, revolutionizing various sectors with its efficiency and innovation. From enhancing communication through interconnected devices to optimizing resource management. Smart-tech fosters convenience, sustainability, and economic growth. By harnessing data-driven insights and automation, Smart-tech not only streamlines daily tasks but also paves the way for a more interconnected and sustainable future

8 Key RISKS to Pakistan's ECONOMY

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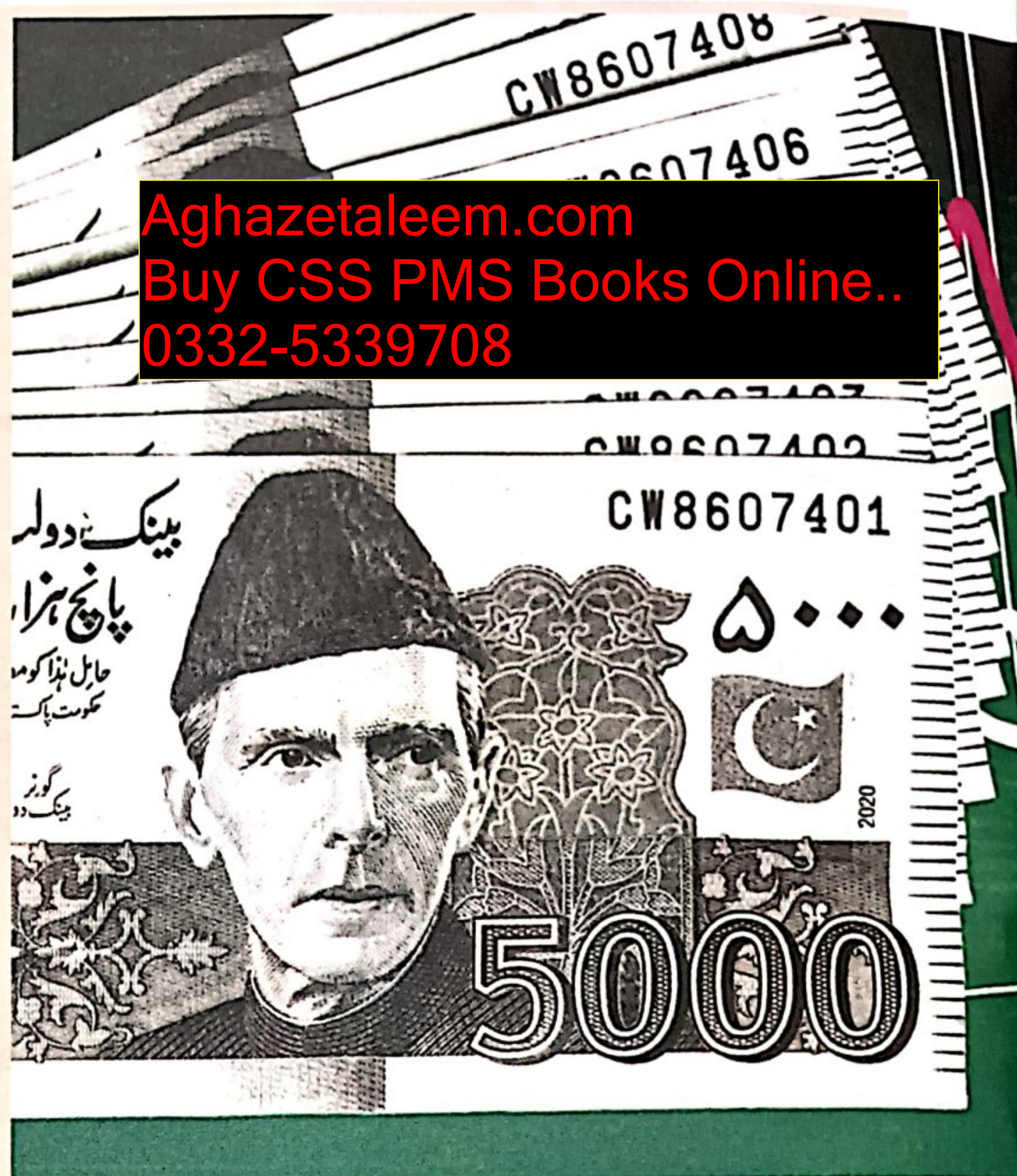
Recently, the Ministry of Finance released its 'Fiscal Risk Statement FY2023-24' which provides an overview of potential risks and uncertainties that could impact the fiscal outlook of Pakistan in the coming years. The report has highlighted that Pakistan's economy has faced multiple challenges in recent years, affecting economic growth and the fiscal deficit. In these turbulent times, the Government of Pakistan has taken various measures to address these challenges, including the implementation of key economic reforms to contain the fiscal deficit, hence increasing investment in key sectors to embark on a path of economic growth. However, the country still faces multiple fiscal risks due to exogenous factors that could impact the country's economic stability and growth prospects.

The report has pointed to the following eight key fiscal risks that can increase the vulnerabilities of Pakistan's economy:

1. Macroeconomic risks

Per the report, the inflation rate has been volatile in recent years, influenced by various factors such as currency devaluation, energy and food prices in the global market. The Pakistani rupee has experienced significant depreciation in recent years, influenced by various risk factors such as trade imbalances, external debt, political instability and global economic conditions. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is actively responding to increasing inflation by raising the policy rate. Moreover, the government is also focusing on taking effective policy, administrative, and relief measures to control inflation and stabilise the economy.

The pace of economic activity during FY2023 has been



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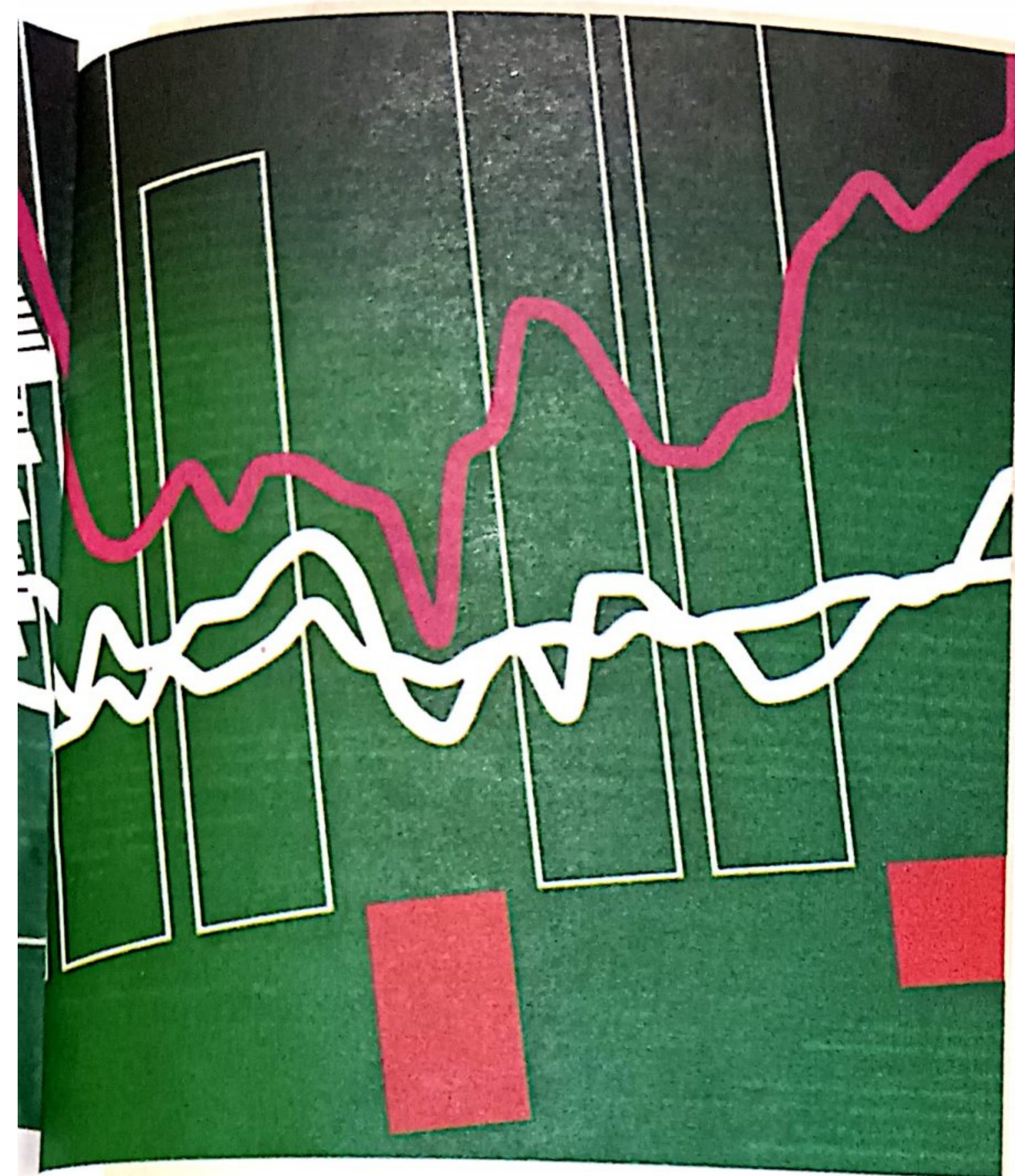
significantly constrained due to several factors, such as demand-compression measures, losses in agricultural production caused by floods, uncertainty regarding the resumption of the IMF program, a difficulty in meeting external financing needs and maintaining foreign exchange reserves.

The inflation outlook has deteriorated, and there is heightened risk to external stability. The uncertainty surrounding the future adjustment path in energy prices is the main upside risk to the inflation outlook. However, a potential moderation in international commodity prices may contribute to a reduction in inflation. Further, exchange rate adjustments, passing on the impact of energy price increases, and interest rates on higher side would enable the prices to decline over the medium term. Subsequently, it would follow expansionary monetary policy and improvements in fiscal space in view of the decline in markup payments.

2. Environmental risks

Climate and natural hazard events pose two significant risks to the Government's fiscal position, namely physical risks and transition risks. With earthquakes and floods, natural disasters in Pakistan have damaged and destroyed physical government assets as well as public infrastructure, requiring significant expenditure on social protection programs and consequent liabilities for damage repair and reconstruction.

Natural disasters have also affected the operations of SOEs. Pakistan Railways, for instance, closed the main line for 35 days during the last floods, resulting in losses in both passenger and freight revenues, whereas the National Highway Authority (NHA) experienced an almost



25 percent decline in its revenues year-on-year (YoY) due to its inability of commuters to use physical assets.

Besides physical risks, there are transition risks that have also affected the Government's fiscal position. These risks arise from the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which could result in stranded assets, reduced demand for carbon-intensive products and increased costs associated with the transition.

3. Losses of state-owned enterprises (SOEs)

While commercial SOEs are expected to be a source of revenue for the Federal Government, in the form of taxes and dividend payments (commensurate with the level of Government equity invested), net inflows have been negative. One of the key drivers of SOE fiscal risk arises from the absence of a clear and comprehensive framework for public sector obligations (PSOs), which would allow SOEs to be properly compensated for undertaking quasi-fiscal activities. The erosion of the SOE's profitability, capacity to invest and financial viability arising from such activities may not become fully apparent for years.

A second key driver of SOEs fiscal risk arises from SOEs inefficiencies. The reasons for such losses differ across SOEs, but typically relate to physical system losses, expenditures not approved by the regulator, slow progress in necessary restructuring and unresolved

corporate governance issues.

4. Public debt

Over the last five years, the total public debt of the Government has exceeded the prescribed limit of 60 percent of GDP under the FRDL Act. This is primarily due to consistent fiscal deficits, averaging 6 percent of GDP since 2010, which have led to a rapid buildup of debt. TPD can increase due to both budgetary and non-budgetary factors, such as unfavorable movements in interest and exchange rates and the realization of contingent liabilities.

Ongoing fiscal deficits require refinancing of the Government's maturing debt while raising additional debt to fulfil the fiscal shortfall. A high level of short-term debt creates potentially significant refinancing challenges during periods of slower economic growth, higher fiscal deficits and/or lower investor confidence.

5. Guarantees

The stock of guarantees, which are issued against the commodity financing operations undertaken by TCP, PASSCO and provincial governments, stood at 4.5 percent of GDP in FY2022. A fiscal risk arises from the fact that a significant part of commodity operations lacks underlying collateral due to issues like theft of commodities, unpaid subsidies and wastage during storage.

6. Public-private partnership risks

By their nature, public-private partnerships (PPPs) have characteristics that can obscure management and mitigation of fiscal costs and risk. PPPs are prone to "fiscal illusion". While cash accounting, which is the only accounting system existing in Pakistan, provides a temporary benefit; over the project cycle, the impact on GoP accounts could worsen.

When selecting projects for PPPs, the GoP will prioritize project's potential macro-fiscal implications at the time of the feasibility study. This implies that the P3A will prioritize PPP projects that are financially sustainable and have a low risk of causing fiscal stress.

7. Provincial governments' fiscal indiscipline

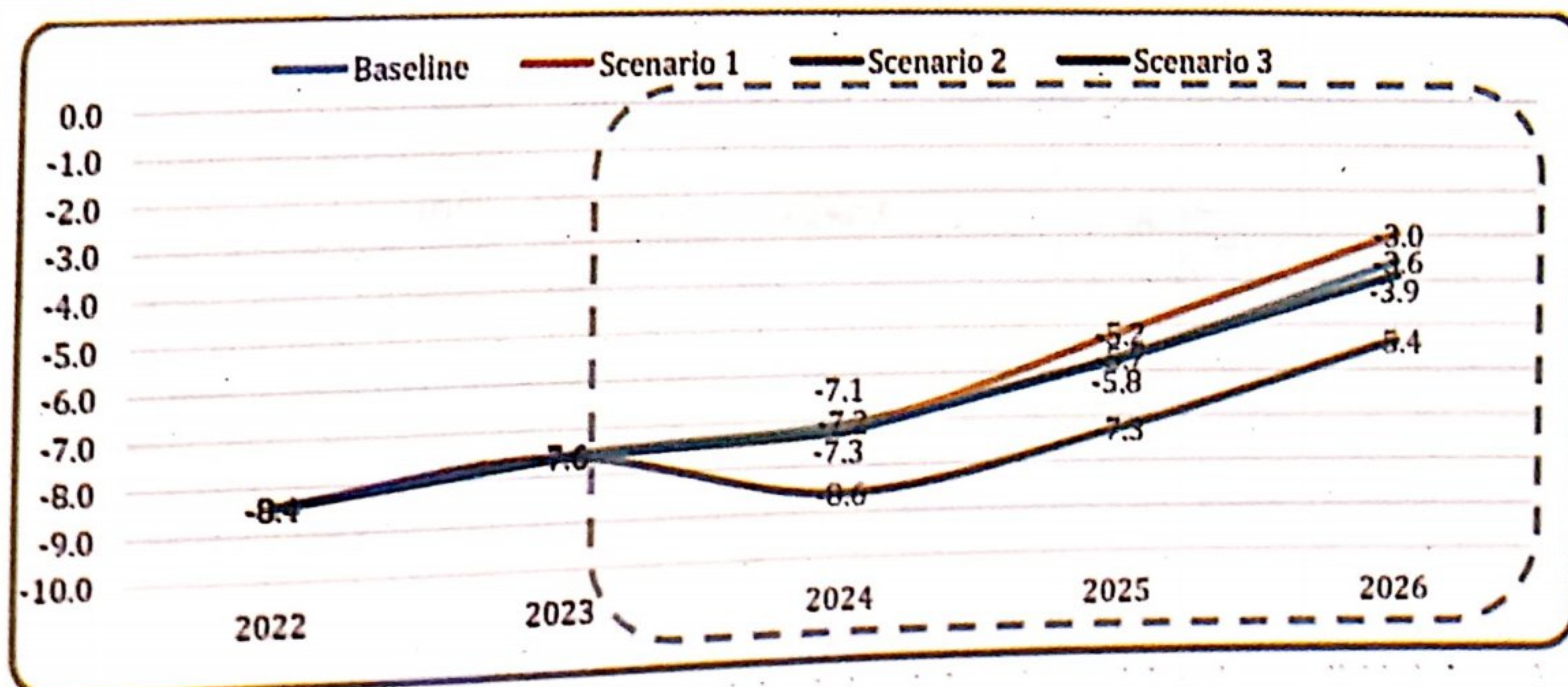
Short-term risks arise from provincial surplus targets, while long-term ones arise from the growing PPP capital stock and spending pressures.

8. Governance challenges

Delays in implementing structural measures to reduce debt and to reform the power sector and governance and capacity difficulties in overseeing SOEs and PPPs pose risks to the country's already fragile economy. ■

The writer is a CSS aspirant.

Figure 3: Federal Fiscal Deficit (Share of GDP, percent)



Understanding Terrorism in Newly Merged Districts

Drivers, Challenges and Viable Options

Zakir Ullah



The merger of the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province in 2018 through the 25th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan marked a significant shift in the governance and security dynamics of the region. This merger aimed to integrate the tribal areas into mainstream Pakistani governance structures and to bring development, stability and peace to the region. However, the transition has been marred by persistent challenges, particularly concerning terrorism and extremism in the Newly Merged Districts (hereinafter NMDs). The instant analysis identifies historical neglect and marginalization, socioeconomic deprivation and the rugged terrain of the area as key drivers of terrorism in the NMDs. These factors have contributed to the emergence and proliferation of extremist ideologies and militant groups, posing significant challenges to the governance and security structure of Pakistan. Understanding the drivers of the resurgence of terrorism in these areas, identifying the associated challenges and exploring viable options to surmount this challenge are critical endeavours for policymakers, researchers and stakeholders alike.

Pakistan's northwestern tribal belt, while nominally part of the country, has maintained a unique semi-autonomous status. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, an agreement was reached that this region would accede to the newly created state, provided it is granted a unique status mentioned above. This autonomy translated into minimal central governance and administration. Under the British Raj, the brutal Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) was enacted in 1901 in the region. It granted extensive executive, judicial and revenue powers to a Political Agent (PA) who was the federal government's representative or main man physically present in each of the agencies. The concentration of power in the hands of PA disenfranchised local populace as development funds and resources were selectively distributed by the PA, often based on patronage.

In the post-independence era, due to the absence of

This article aims to delve into the multifaceted aspects of terrorism in the newly Merged Districts, analyzing its drivers, delineating the challenges it poses and proposing potential strategies and solutions to mitigate its impact and foster sustainable peace and development.

accountability, audits and effective governance, FATA remained the least-developed region in Pakistan. Two tragic

events in the last five decades have been particularly disastrous for the FATA: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and the War on Terror launched by the United States against militants in Afghanistan in 2001. These events have deeply affected internal dynamics and socio-political developments in the region.

The 1980s heralded a decade of transformation for FATA. The increasing Soviet influence in Afghanistan thrust the adjoining FATA into the international spotlight. The United States, amidst the Cold War with the Soviet Union, developed a renewed interest in the tribal belt. Its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) collaborated with ISI, Pakistan's premier intelligence agency, along with Saudi donors, to finance, train and arm mujahideen, who operated from this region. Indeed, as extensively documented, FATA's "Islamic soldiers," or mujahideen, were consistently imbued with a specific brand of violent jihadist fervour to instigate a holy war to stem the expansion of Soviet communism in Afghanistan and beyond. Noted scholar Tariq Amin Khan observed that this external funding and interest in Islamizing Pakistan's largely secular public sphere are [still] unprecedented.

Notwithstanding that, the drivers of terrorism in the NMDs are varied and complex, stemming from socio-economic, political, security and ideological factors. Socio-economic disparities, including marginalization, poverty and limited access to education and employment opportunities, create fertile ground for radicalization and recruitment of the locals by terrorist groups. Weak governance structures, corruption and ethnic and tribal tensions exacerbate security challenges, allowing terrorist organizations to exploit governance deficits and inter-communal conflicts to pursue their agendas. Geographical proximity to conflict zones, such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, exposes the NMDs to the spillover effects of violence, while inadequate border management facilitates the movement of militants and illicit goods. Pervasive radical ideologies, sectarian tensions and the

Table 2: Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan in 2023

Region	No. of Attacks	Killed	Injured
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	174	422	782
Balochistan	110	229	282
Punjab	6	16	8
Karachi	14	16	26
Sindh (excluding Karachi)	1	0	0
Gilgit-Baltistan	1	10	26
Total	306	693	1,124

propagation of extremist narratives further contribute to the perpetuation of terrorist activities in the region. Marginalization contribute to the alienation and disenfranchisement among the local population, making them vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment by terrorist groups.

Following the Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan, Pakistan witnessed a staggering 73 percent surge in terrorist attacks. This increase was markedly higher compared to the corresponding period before the Taliban's takeover. Ever since the Taliban assumed control of Kabul, Pakistan has been experiencing a notable uptick in terrorism. From August 2021 to April 2023 alone, there has been a concerning 138 percent rise in the number of fatalities resulting from attacks. This surge in violence underscores that the escalating patterns of terrorism will exacerbate Pakistan's enduring security challenges. These include the ongoing Taliban militancy in KP and the former Balochistan, ethno-nationalist insurgency in Sindh, along with escalating religious

extremism and radicalism. 'Pakistan's Afghan Perspective and Policy Options', a report published by Pak Institute for Peace Studies says, "Persisting over an extended duration, such a climate of insecurity, militancy and violence can pose significant threats to both political and economic stability." Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, a Professor of Politics and International Relations at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, emphasizes the necessity for a comprehensive review of Pakistan's Afghan policy, which spans over five decades. He has advocated for an inclusive approach that incorporates input from all segments of society, rather than solely focusing on religious and economic perspectives. Dr. Jaspal stressed the importance of treating Afghanistan as a sovereign state,

enhancing border management and combating smuggling. Moreover, Major-General (retired) Inam Ul Haque, a defense and strategic affairs analyst, identified the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and border fencing as key factors influencing Pak-Afghan relations. He highlighted these as critical "variables" and potential sources of tension.

Despite these challenges, there are several viable options for addressing terrorism in the NMDs.

Implementing comprehensive development initiatives that focus on improving infrastructure and enhancing people's access to better healthcare, education and economic opportunities can help address the underlying grievances that fuel extremism and terrorism. Furthermore, enhancing security measures through increased surveillance, intelligence gathering and border management can disrupt terrorist networks and prevent cross-border infiltration. Strengthening community resilience through engagement, dialogue and empowerment initiatives can also foster trust between the

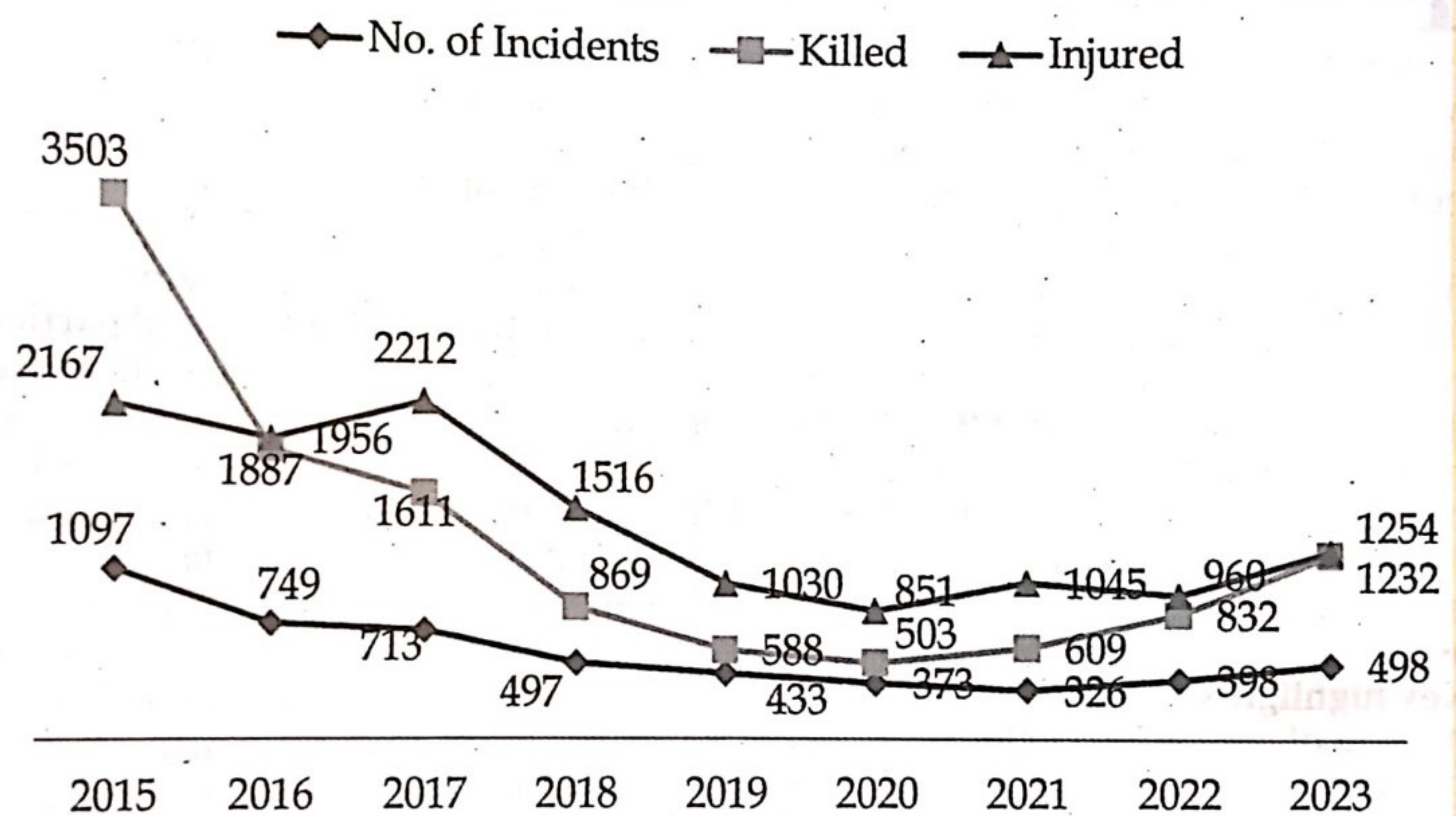
government and local populations, undermining the appeal of extremist ideologies.

Taking effective measures to combat terrorism and extremism and nipping the wave of terrorism in NMDs in the bud require several pragmatic approaches.

Firstly, promoting infrastructure and functional mechanisms, as well as organic structures of institutions, can help protect the fundamental rights of the people, as enshrined in the constitution of Pakistan, thereby addressing the issue of terrorism, though to some extent. Secondly, applying Lederach's Pyramid as a problem-solving framework can be useful as it emphasizes engaging with communities and individuals to foster long-term, sustainable conflict transformation, rather than simply managing or containing conflict through political settlements.

Thirdly, desensitizing and demilitarizing the environment of NMDs can promote a culture of education, dialogue and academic and physical activities. Implementing sophisticated reforms in the National Action Plan to counter terrorism and extremism in the region and

Chart 2: Comparison of Overall Incidents of Violence & Casualties (2015-23)



apprehending outlawed militant groups, is crucial.

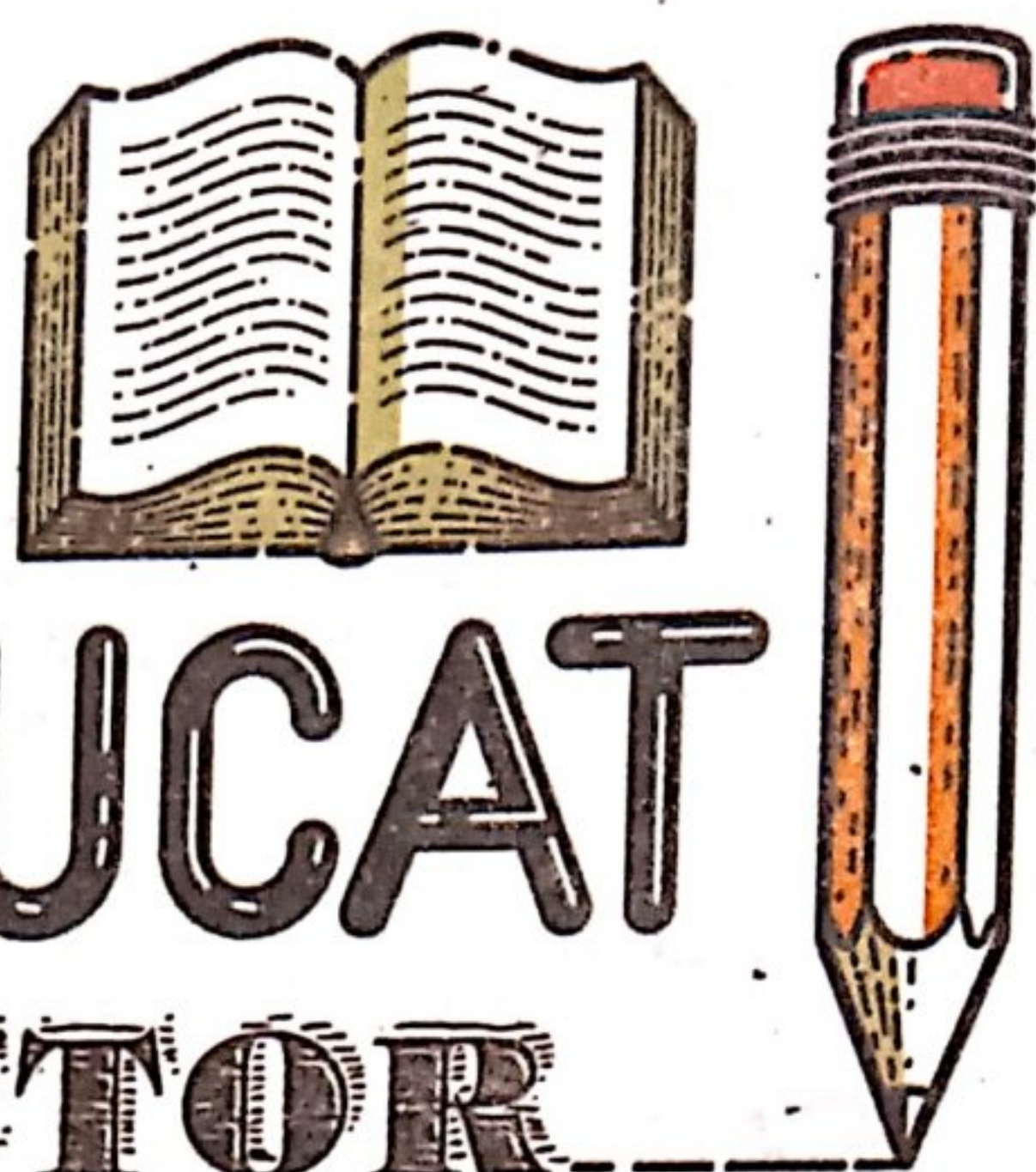
Most importantly, fostering harmony in civil-military relations is essential to building confidence and ensuring state security.

Last but not least, Pakistan should improve its ties with Afghanistan while also taking the initiative of non-involvement. This will pave the way for tackling terrorism and strengthening internal dynamics, augmenting the social contract between the people and the state.

In a nutshell, addressing terrorism in the NMDs requires a multifaceted approach that combines security measures with socioeconomic development and community engagement. By understanding the drivers of terrorism, identifying key challenges and implementing targeted strategies, it is possible to mitigate the threat of extremism and promote peace and stability in the region. ■

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THE NEGLECT OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR



An education emergency is what we need

Naila Azhar

Pakistan Institute of Education - a subsidiary of the education ministry - recently released a report on the performance of the education sector of the country. The report has revealed a harrowing state of affairs in the sector, particularly the disparity in the availability of essential facilities - such as toilets, potable water, boundary walls - in different regions of the country.

As per the report "Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22," there are 26 million out-of-school children in the country. Disturbingly, 39% of children in the school-going age group are currently out of school, indicating a persistent challenge in ensuring universal education. To put this number into perspective, the UN claims that there are around 244 million children and adolescents not in school, which would mean Pakistan alone accounts for around 10 percent of the global total.

Key highlights

A. Span of education system

- There is a total of 313,418 educational institutions of all types and across all levels in Pakistan.
- Among these, 227,506 (73%) are formal schools from primary to higher secondary level, 43,613 (14%) are religious schools/*deeni madaris*, 25,106 (8%) are non-formal basic education institutes, 10,087 (3%) are education foundations, 4,182 (1%) technical & vocational institutes and 2,487 (1%) degree colleges. There are also 220 universities and 217 teacher training institutes.
- There are a total of 54,870,964 enrolled students in all types across all levels.
- There are a total of 2,139,631 in all institution types across all levels.

B. Public-private divide

- There is a total of 313,418 both public and private schools (including 2,088 other public category) across all levels in the school education system in Pakistan.
- Majority of this combined total, 176,184 (56.2%) belong to the public sector, while the private

sector makes up for 137,234 (43.8%) schools.

- A majority of 29,359,376 (53.5%) students are enrolled in the public sector (including other public sector enrolment), whereas the private sector has a total enrolment of 46.5% (25,511,588) students.
- Private schools employ 58% of these teachers (1,249,746), whereas public schools employ the remaining 42% (889,885).

C. Intake and participation

a. Gross Intake Ratio (GIR)

- Gross Intake Ratio (GIR) in Primary Education is 81%. ICT (113%) has the highest GIR in Primary Education, whereas Balochistan (54%) has the lowest.
- GIR for the first grade of primary education for males and females is 87% and 74%, respectively.
- Gross Intake to last grade of primary is 65%, with Punjab (74%) having the highest and Balochistan (35%) having the lowest.
- GIR to last grade of Middle is 47%. ICT (82%) has the highest and Balochistan (20%) the lowest.

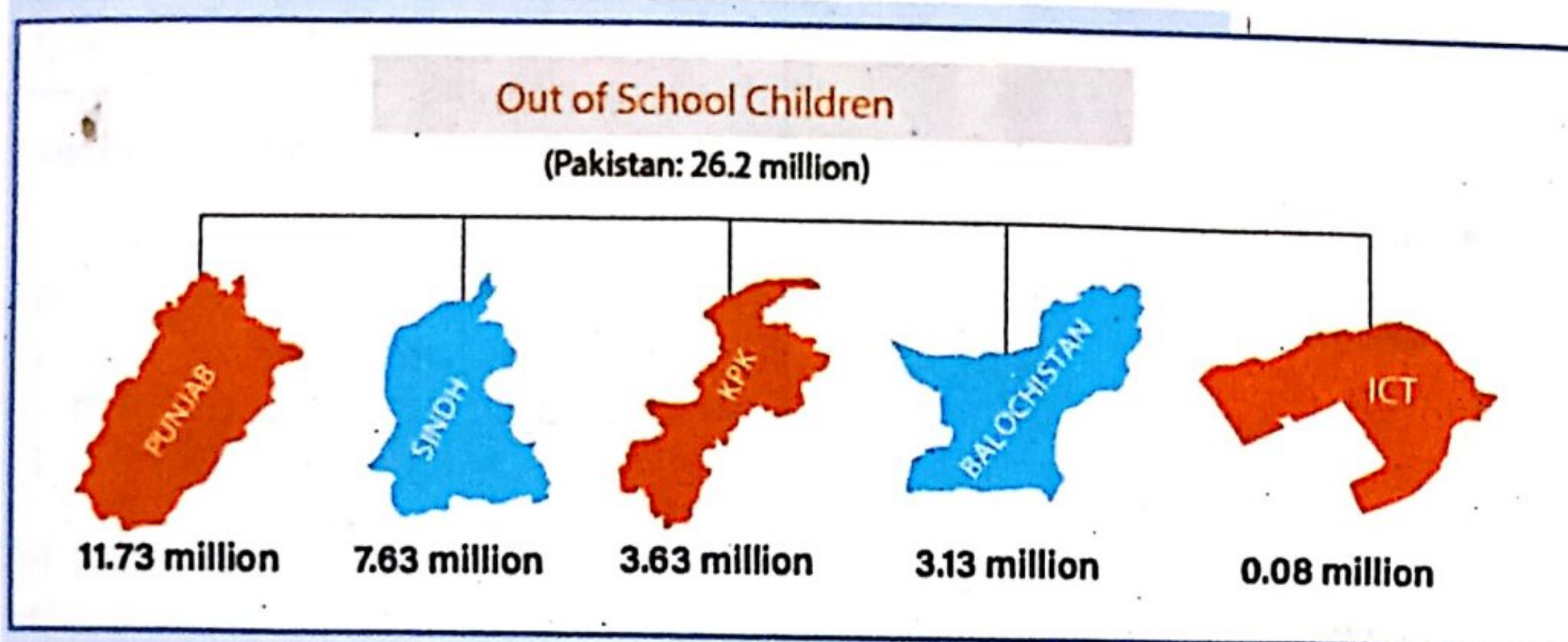
b. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

- GER for primary education in 2021-22 is at 76%, 51% for lower secondary, and 32% for upper secondary.
- There has been notable decrease in GER across all levels in Pakistan, with the most pronounced decrease coming at the primary level. The GER at the primary level exhibited a 21-percentage point decrease, going down from 97% in 2016-17 to 76% in 2021-22.

c. Out-of-school Children (OOSC)

- There are 26.2 million out-of-school children in Pakistan in 2021-22. 11.73 million, 7.63 million, 3.63 million, 3.13 million and 0.08 million students are out of school in Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan and ICT respectively.
- In terms of percentage, 39% of children of school-going age are out of school. Balochistan (65%) has the highest percentage as a proportion of its school-going age children,

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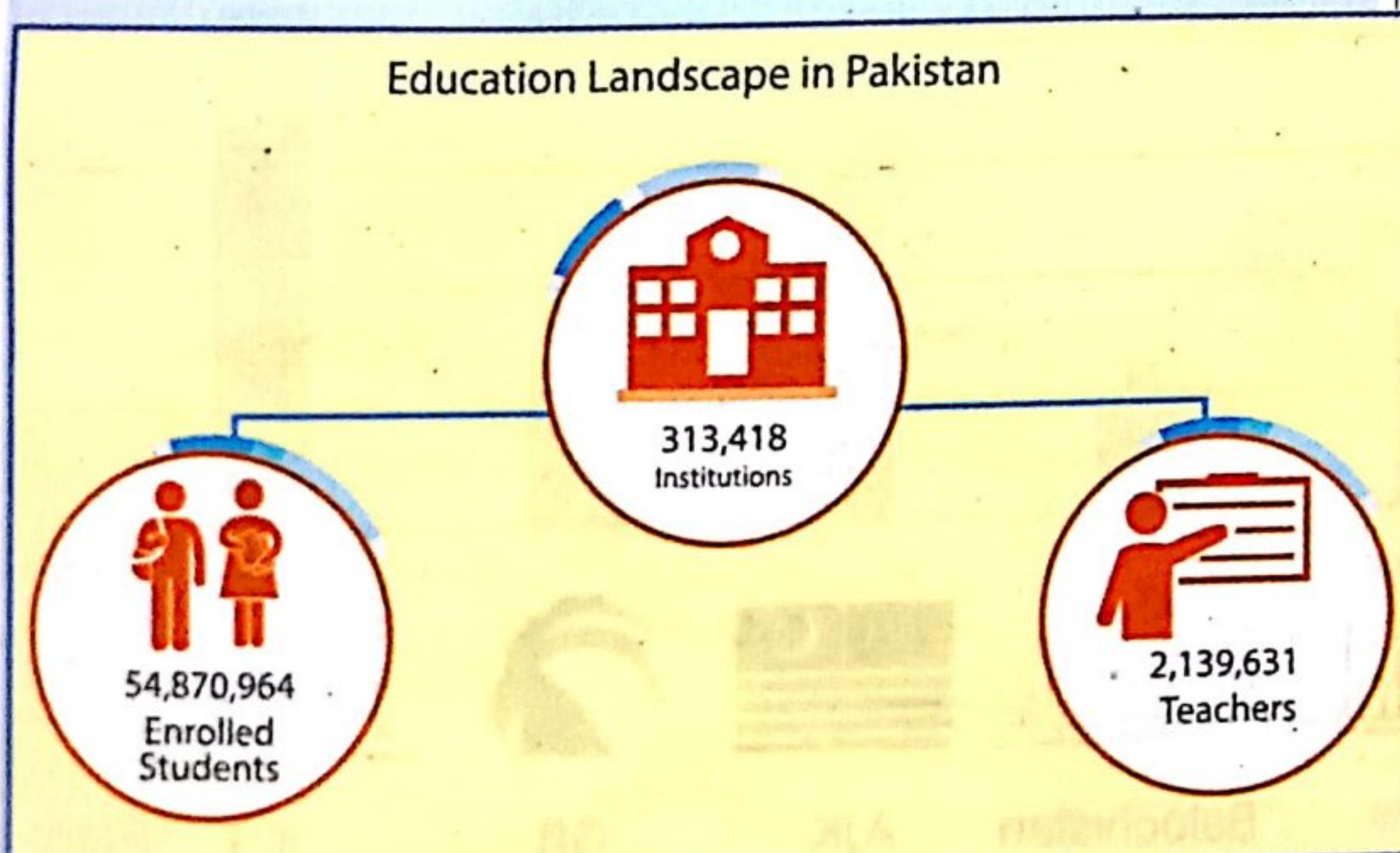


whereas ICT has the lowest. Among the four major provinces, KP (30%) has the lowest percentage of out-of-school children as proportion of its school-going age population.

- The percentage of out-of-school children in Pakistan has decreased from 44% in 2016-17 to 39% in 2021-22. Despite this decrease in percentage, the absolute number of out-of-school children has gone up from 22.02 million in 2016-17 to 26.21 million in 2021-22.
- This is primarily attributed to the population increasing at a higher rate compared to the rate of decrease in out-of-school children.
- At the higher secondary level, 60% children are out of school in 2021-22. A further 44%, 30% and 36% are out of school at high, middle and primary levels, respectively.
- In absolute number terms, a substantial portion (10.77 million) of the out-of-school children are at the primary level.
- Economic disparities significantly affect access to education in Pakistan. Children from the poorest quintile are the most disadvantaged, with a high percentage of OOSC at all education levels.

d. Survival & effective transition rates

- In 2021-22, the survival rate to grade 5 in Pakistan is 77%, which means that 77% of all students who enter grade 1 are, on average, able to reach grade 5. This has gone up from 67% in 2016-17 to 77% in 2021-22.
- In 2021-22 the Effective Transition Rate (ETR) from primary to middle is 81%, whereas the ETR from middle to high is 90%.
- In 2021-22, ETR from primary to high has slightly decreased from 91% in 2016-17 to 90%



in 2021-22, while the ETR from middle to high has decreased from 84% in 2016-17 to 81% in 2021-22.

D. Ratios in education

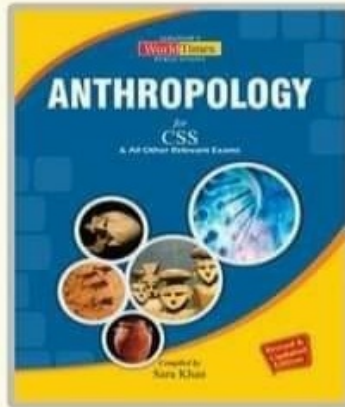
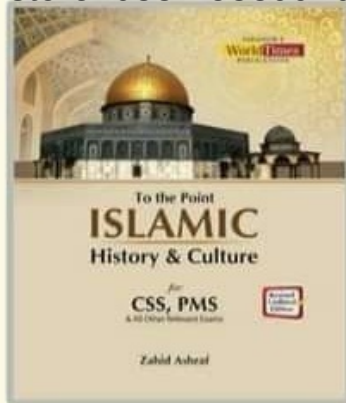
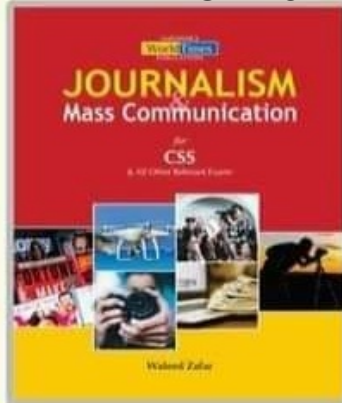
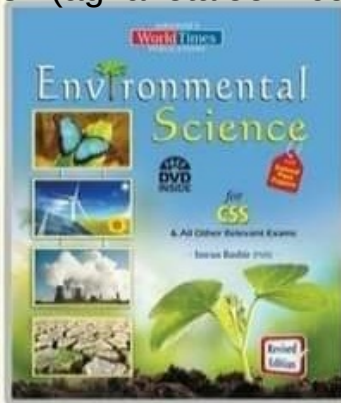
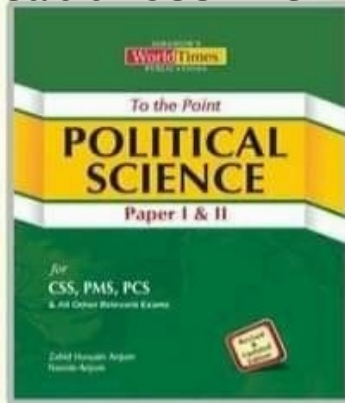
- In 2021-22, the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) is 39, 25 and 30 for primary, middle and upper secondary levels, respectively. PTR has increased for each of the three aforementioned levels from 2016-17 to 2021-22.

• In 2021-22, the Pupil-School Ratio (PSR) in public schools in Pakistan is 162, suggesting that each school, on average, accommodates 162 students. ICT has the highest PSR at 415 whereas Balochistan has the lowest at 74.

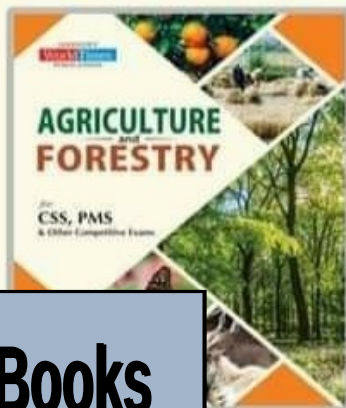
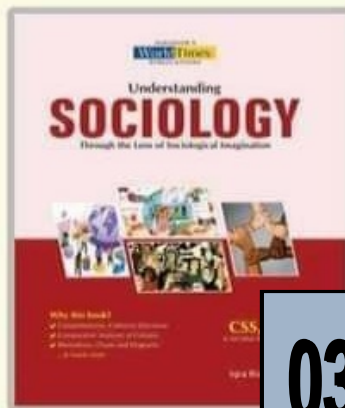
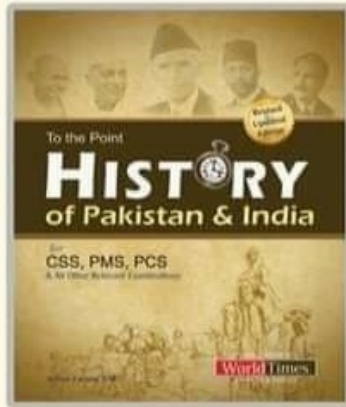
- In 2021-22, the Teacher-School Ratio (TSR) in Pakistan is 5. ICT has the highest TSR with there being 15 teachers per each school, whereas both Sindh and Balochistan have the lowest TSR with there being 3 teachers per each school in both of the provinces, respectively.

E. Basic facilities in schools

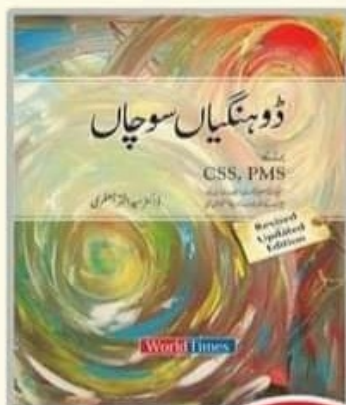
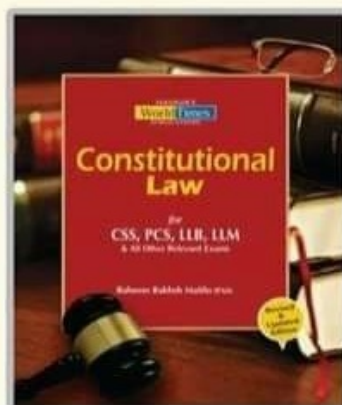
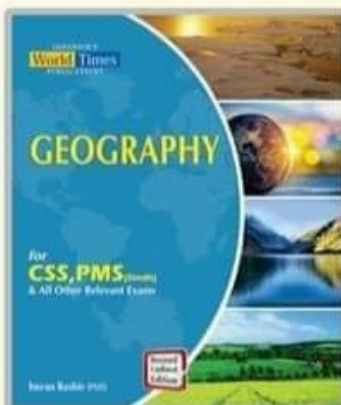
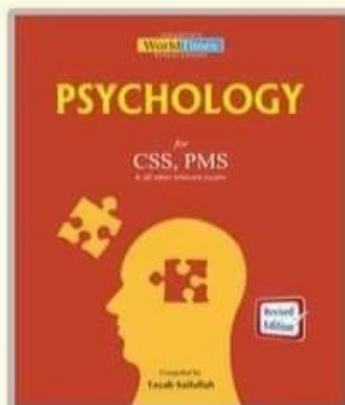
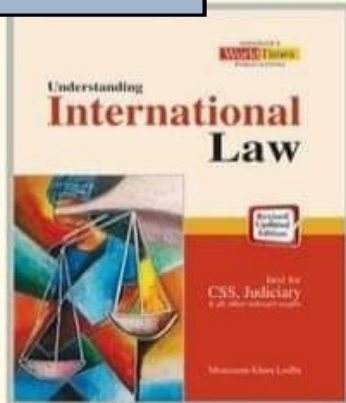
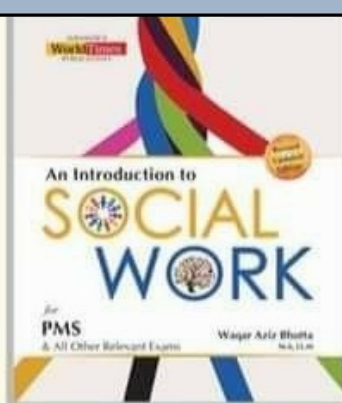
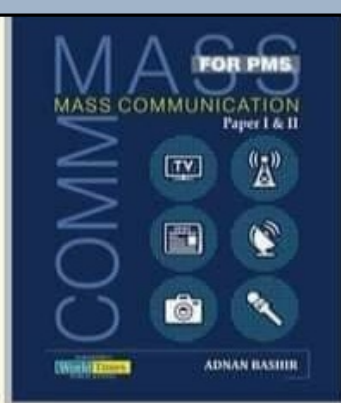
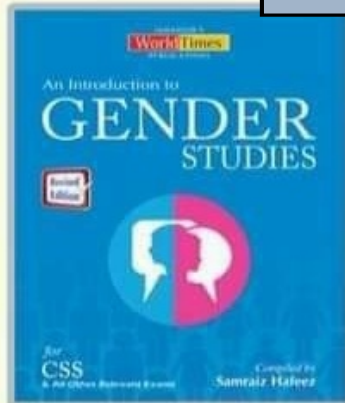
- As per the report, Punjab, the Islamabad Capital Territory, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa fared comparatively better in terms of education facilities.
- Balochistan's education sector faced significant challenges. The report said only 23% of primary schools in the province had access to potable water.
- Azad Jammu & Kashmir has 31% primary schools with access to drinking water, followed by 61% in Sindh.
- Gilgit-Baltistan's 63% primary schools have potable water.
- The situation is not much better in middle schools either; 40% schools in Balochistan and 52% schools in AJK only have access to potable water.
- Only 59% of Sindh's schools, 39% in Balochistan, 31% in AJK, and 61% in GB have a boundary wall.
- Electricity availability also shows significant regional discrepancies. While Punjab and ICT have managed to provide electricity to all primary schools, the figures are lower in other provinces and regions: only 15% in Balochistan, 21% in AJK, 38% in Sindh, and 44% in Gilgit-Baltistan are powered.
- Toilet facilities are scarce in primary schools. Only 33% schools in Balochistan, 42% in AJK, and 57% in Sindh have access to toilets. The report said that 24% of primary schools across Pakistan do not have toilet facilities for students, adding that 10% middle and 3% high schools do not have this basic facility.
- In Punjab, 99% primary schools and all middle and high schools have toilets. But in Sindh, 43% primary schools do not have this facility and 25% middle and 7% of high schools are also deprived of this facility. In KP, the situation is relatively better. Its 93% primary schools, 97% middle



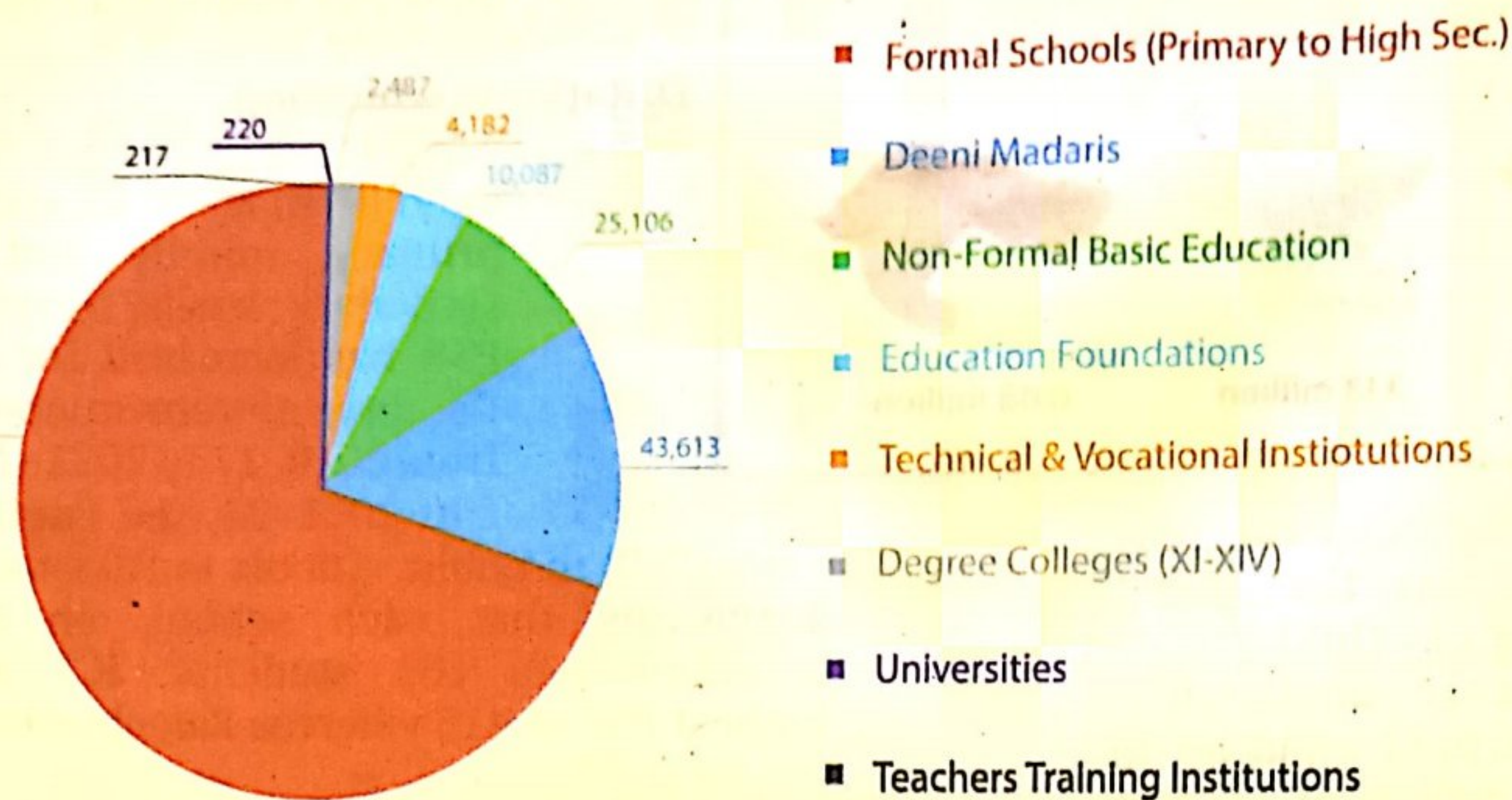
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Number of Institutions by Type



schools, and 99% high schools have the facility available to their students.

- In Balochistan, the situation is alarming. 77% primary schools, 31% middle schools, and 4% high schools do not have toilets for students. In Azad Kashmir, 58% primary, 34% middle, and 23% high schools do not have this facility. In Gilgit-Baltistan, 28% primary and 10% middle schools do not have this facility.

Analysis

In a disconcerting revelation, the recent Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22 report has laid bare the dismal state of the nation's education sector, exposing a prolonged neglect that demands urgent attention. The report sheds light on a multitude of challenges, ranging from poor financial allocations to regional disparities, painting a grim picture of an education system in dire need of intervention. Financial neglect stands out as a primary contributor, with inadequate funds resulting in poor pupil-teacher ratios and a lack of essential facilities. The startling figure of 26 million out-of-school children serves as a stark reminder of the government's failure to ensure universal access to education. The deficiencies in the provision of basic facilities, including toilets, potable water and boundary walls, point to systemic issues that hinder the development and learning of students.

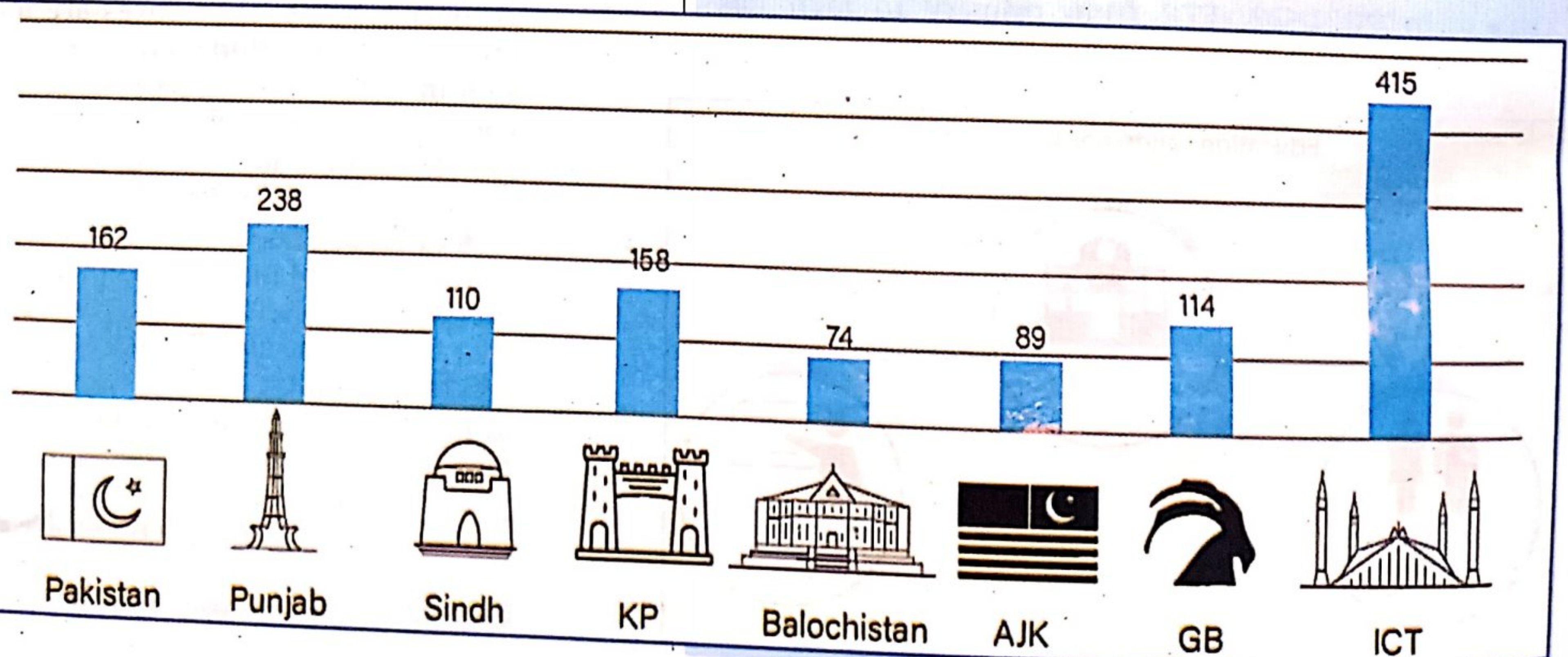
Regional imbalances, especially in provinces like Balochistan, highlight government neglect and exacerbate existing disparities. The ramifications of this neglect extend beyond immediate challenges and impact overall economic development on a broader scale. Rebuilding the education infrastructure necessitates serious investments. These crises and a tremendous youth bulge call for drastic increases in education spending. However, the state does not appear to have gotten the message, with current education spending at a mere 1.7 percent of GDP, which is reportedly the lowest in the region. Although Pakistan's gross tertiary school enrollment has risen from around

2% at the beginning of the century to an estimated 13% as of 2021, this is much lower than countries like India and Bangladesh, with 32% and 23% gross tertiary school enrollment, respectively. It is a small wonder that these countries are now leaving us further and further behind in pretty much all facets.

If we are to ever catch up, education will have to become a bigger priority among our leaders and this has to be reflected in how much they are willing to spend on it. Aside from more political will, better education outcomes will also necessitate fundamental changes in how things are done in Pakistan. While devolving education to the provinces was, in theory, a good idea, a highly centralized fiscal system leaves the provinces ill-equipped to carry out this crucial task. Pakistan has a highly diverse population and a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach, arguably embodied by the PTI government's SNC, is the last thing the country needs. However, ensuring that a more inclusive approach is possible will not happen unless the country builds on the de-centralization initiated by the 18th Amendment by giving provinces and local governments a bigger voice and a bigger piece of the pie. ■

The writer is a social worker.

Pupil-School Ratio in Government Schools by Province - 2021-22



CONTRACT FARMING in Foreign Lands

A possible growth driver for the economy

For any government, ensuring food security for the population of the country is a daunting challenge. When it comes to Pakistan, a country with a rising population and limited land, addressing this challenge has indeed become a daunting task for the government. During recent years, agricultural production in Pakistan has shown some remarkable performance that has helped the government manage food for its people. But with the adverse impact of climate change intensifying, rapid industrialisation and increased use of land for physical infrastructure, the availability of cultivable land is declining. So, the question that has been agitating the minds of many is: how long can the country do it with limited arable land and declining land fertility? The answer to this question lies in the application of scientific technology and the seeking of other ways to enhance food production. In such circumstances, contract farming seems to be a unique opportunity for ensuring food security.

The state of food security in Pakistan

As an agrarian economy, Pakistan has long relied on the fact that it is capable of producing enough food to fulfil the caloric requirements of its own population, and then having enough leftover to be an exporter. Historically, this has been true. Over the past few years, however, the country has emerged as a net importer of food.

Food security is possibly one of the biggest problems facing Pakistan right now. In an international ranking of the Global Hunger Index (GHI) this year, the country ranked 92 out of 116 nations, with its hunger categorised as 'serious.' Pakistan currently faces a scenario in which it is largely food-sufficient but not

If it is true that an army marches on its stomach, the same can be said for whole nations. Along with providing secure borders, public safety and accessible health care, one of a government's critical tasks is making sure its people have access to safe and plentiful food. Not every country is so fortunate to have secure and reliable food supplies for its people. Pakistan, too, has been facing a serious food security crisis since long, despite the fact that the country produces a large quantity of important food crops. Despite being an agri-based economy, food security has now become a formidable challenge for Pakistan as rising costs of production as well as the wider global warming threat have made food prices skyrocket at a rate that is much higher than that of other countries, including neighbouring India, meaning more and more people are finding it hard to meet their food intake requirements given the high inflation and shrinking purchasing power. The 2023 FAO report on the state of food security and nutrition says that over half of Pakistan's population suffers from moderate-to-severe food insecurity. This underscores the need to protect the agriculture sector against a worse food crisis. Contract farming, which is the practice of outsourcing agricultural produce to other countries, can be a viable option to pursue the goal of ensuring food security.



food-secure. Despite Pakistan being ranked 8th in producing wheat, 10th in rice, 5th in sugarcane, and 4th in milk production, a 2019 report by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) showed that nearly 37% of households in Pakistan are food insecure. In the four years since the SBP's report, matters have only worsened. Food price inflation in Pakistan has been in double digits since August 2019. The cost of food has been 10.4%–19.5% higher than the previous year in urban areas and 12.6%–23.8% in rural areas, according to figures published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Food and agricultural experts have long stressed that failing to take appropriate initiatives could severely impact the future generations of the country due to rising food shortages. The on-ground experience of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) corroborates these findings, revealing that poor households lack the means to purchase essential food. They face a scarcity of alternative food sources and limited avenues for dietary diversification.

Introducing contract farming

Contract farming refers to the practice where agricultural production is carried out on the basis of agreements between farmers and agribusiness firms, typically located in different countries. It is, in effect, a business modality whereby buyers and producers establish an agreement in advance on the terms and conditions for the production and marketing of agrifood products. In simple words, it can be defined as agricultural production carried out according to an agreement between a buyer and farmers that establishes conditions for the production and marketing of a farm product or products. Typically, the farmer agrees to provide agreed-upon quantities of a specific agricultural product. This arrangement involves farmers producing crops or livestock according to predetermined terms set by the contracting companies. The terms often include specifications on the type of crops to be grown, production techniques, quality standards, pricing, and sometimes even the supply of inputs such as seeds and fertilisers.

It is, hence, essentially an agreement between unequal parties: companies, government bodies or individual entrepreneurs on the one hand, and economically weaker farmers on the other. It is, however, an approach that can contribute to both increased income for farmers and higher profitability for sponsors. When efficiently organized and managed, contract farming reduces risk and uncertainty for both parties as compared to buying and selling crops on the open market.

An example

In December last year, Pakistan made its first

shipment of dry red chilies to China as part of enhanced agricultural cooperation between Pakistan and China in the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is currently underway after the success of the first phase focusing on infrastructure and power projects. Advancing cooperation in the agricultural sector, China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) and Sichuan Litong Food Group had established a company and carried out a red chilli contract farming project in 2021 with model farms across Punjab. Chinese companies provided local farmers with technology and training to increase production substantially and grow high-quality crops, including chilies.

Some South Asian countries, notably India and Pakistan, have begun investing in agricultural ventures in East and West African countries. The allure of guaranteed income, increased employment opportunities for farm labourers, and the abundance of untapped arable land across the African continent serve as primary incentives driving these investments.

Benefits

Contract farming abroad can provide numerous benefits, such as access to markets, technology transfer and assured incomes for farmers.

- First, it ensures a consistent supply of agricultural produce with quality, at the right time and at a lower cost, resulting in better control over the factors of production.
- Second, assured supply aids food processing industries in better supply chain management. It reduces the demand-supply gap by plugging supply-side constraints. Contract farming also enables the food processing industries to invest in warehouses, and cold storage and design the logistics in the long term.
- Third, it makes small-scale farming competitive. Small farmers can access technology, credit, marketing channels and information while lowering transaction costs. They have an assured market for their produce at their doorsteps, reducing marketing and transaction costs.
- Fourth, it reduces the risk of production, price and marketing costs. Contract farming can open up new markets that would otherwise be unavailable to small farmers, thereby reducing intermediaries and providing more options to farmers.
- Fifth, contract farming also ensures higher



production of better quality, financial support in cash and/or kind, and technical guidance. It enables optimal utilisation of installed capacity, infrastructure and manpower and responds to the food safety and quality concerns of consumers.

- Lastly, it leads to direct private investment in agricultural activities as they find it profitable. The farmers enter into contract production with an assured price under certain terms and conditions.

The potential benefits of contract farming have fascinated international development organizations, governments, and other actors interested in agricultural and rural development. The governments of many countries have supported contract farming opportunities for smallholder farmers through subsidies to encourage firms to expand their operations to new areas and farmers.

Benefits for the government

- Possibilities of skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled manpower export to foreign countries to work on agricultural land.
- Potential for agro-based industries in foreign land and exports of agricultural products like cereal crops, fruits and vegetables.
- Creating more agriculture or industrial entrepreneurs, gaining worldwide experience and knowledge.
- It will also help to reduce unemployment problems and earn foreign exchange to contribute to a country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

Challenges

However, it also raises concerns about equity in the distribution of benefits. Additionally, contract farming often involves navigating complex legal and regulatory frameworks across different jurisdictions, including issues related to land ownership, money transfers, environmental regulations, etc. Cultural and socio-economic factors also play a significant role in shaping the dynamics of contract farming arrangements, with considerations such as land tenure systems, labour practices and community relationships impacting the success and sustainability of such ventures.

Despite these challenges, when implemented transparently and responsibly, contract farming abroad has the potential to contribute to food security, agricultural development and global economic integration, fostering partnerships that span continents and driving innovation in the agricultural sector. Therefore, careful regulation and monitoring are essential to ensure that contract farming arrangements abroad are fair, equitable, and mutually beneficial for all parties involved.

Small farmers dominate agricultural landholding patterns in Pakistan, where financial exclusion remains alarmingly high. Farmers, particularly small landholders, are facing problems accessing finance from the banking sector due to their inability to provide collateral acceptable to banks. This adversely impacts our agricultural produce. So, besides fixing this issue, we need to explore business/farming opportunities in foreign countries that have abundant land and other natural resources with a smaller population. Our businessmen/entrepreneurs should be encouraged to

invest, explore and exploit the potential opportunities of contract farming in foreign lands. Our agricultural graduates who are passing out from agricultural institutions or universities are interested in a self-employed job in agriculture, dairy or poultry farming, small or mini-agriculture-related industries at home or abroad. There is a huge demand and potential for agriculture products worldwide that can be produced and exported to other countries to meet local needs.

Conclusion

In an open economy, the whole world is now a global village and a global platform for working and having jobs for human beings. Every country in the world depends on each other for mutual benefits like export-import, trade and investment, expatriate transfer, materials or inputs, adaptable technology and attracting foreign direct

AI in agriculture

The transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in agriculture is a topic of growing significance in our ever-evolving world. In recent years, AI has emerged as a powerful ally in addressing key challenges faced by the agriculture sector. Its ability to analyze vast amounts of data has revolutionized decision-making processes for farmers, who are now better able to make informed choices about crop management, resource allocation and pest control. Through predictive analytics, AI has empowered farmers to anticipate and mitigate potential risks, ultimately enhancing yield and efficiency.

Furthermore, AI-powered technologies, such as precision farming and automated machinery, have streamlined agricultural operations. This not only optimizes resource utilization but also contributes to sustainable practices by minimizing waste. The integration of AI in agriculture marks a significant step towards achieving a more resilient and environmentally conscious food production system.

It is noteworthy to acknowledge the positive impact AI has on crop monitoring and disease detection. By leveraging advanced algorithms and machine learning, AI can swiftly identify signs of crop diseases or nutritional deficiencies, allowing for prompt intervention. This proactive approach not only safeguards crop health but also plays a crucial role in ensuring food security on a global scale.

As we navigate the complexities of modern agriculture, it is essential to embrace innovations that enhance productivity while minimizing environmental impact. AI stands at the forefront of this revolution, offering practical solutions to age-old challenges. Shedding light on the intersection of AI and agriculture will not only inform but also inspire individuals to recognize the potential of technology in fostering a sustainable and resilient future for our agricultural landscape.

investment (FDI) for their respective socio-economic developments. Big African countries with vast land resources that are barren, unproductive, uncultivated for lack of skilled and energetic manpower, adequate capital, machinery or management offer huge potential in this context. As we have plenty of underemployed manpower in the agriculture sector, it can be an opportunity for the unemployed educated people to be employed in this field. It can help us reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) too. We should encourage the potential and possible sectors of contract farming/business in foreign lands. A high-level committee from the Foreign Ministry and Planning Ministry can formulate a pragmatic policy in this regard. ■

The writer is an academic and agriculturalist.

INTERNATIONAL

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EL NIÑO

Impact on Pakistan

Ahmar Alam

On March 05, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), a specialised agency of the United Nations, said in a media release that the 2023-24 El Niño, one of the five strongest on record, has peaked and is gradually weakening — but it will continue to impact climate around the world in the coming months by fuelling the heat trapped in the atmosphere by greenhouse gases. The WMO has predicted above normal temperatures over almost all land areas between March and May this year. The organization says there is about a 60% chance of El Niño persisting during March-May and an 80% chance of neutral conditions (neither El Niño or La Niña) in April-June. There is a chance of La Niña developing later in the year, but the odds are currently uncertain.

What is El Niño?

El Niño refers to the abnormal warming of sea surface waters in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. It is a naturally occurring climate pattern typically associated with increased heat worldwide, as well as drought in some parts of the world and heavy rains elsewhere.

El Niño episodes emerge naturally during autumn-summer in the northern hemisphere, typically once every 2-7 years. It peaks during the winter (October-February) before weakening in the subsequent summer, making it a phenomenon that typically lasts for between 9 and 12 months. Occasionally, El Niño will last up to two years in a row.

El Niño is mainly a seasonal climate phenomenon with climate impacts on seasonal climate averages, but it can make extreme weather and climate-events more likely in certain regions. Furthermore, the seasonal forecasts are found to be more accurate during El Niño and La Niña events, particularly in the tropics, and this emphasizes the pivotal role of early warnings to support decision-making and enhance preparedness and

anticipatory action. It is part of a larger climate pattern known as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO). During a typical El Niño event, the warm oceanic waters shift eastward, altering the atmospheric circulation patterns in the region. This can have significant impacts on weather patterns around the world.

It typically has the greatest impact on the global climate in the year after it develops — in this instance, 2024.

El Niño episodes affect the global weather, lead to an increase in temperatures and large-scale dryness and droughts, and disrupt normal rainfall patterns globally. Large parts of East Africa have experienced multiple failed rainy seasons in recent years, in part due to El Niño conditions.

After the last episode in 2015-16, El Niño conditions emerged for the first time in June last year — and average temperatures breached new records across most parts of the world in every subsequent month. As El Niño peaked between November 2023 and January 2024, recorded sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean touched 2 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 normal, as per the WMO. The 2023-24 El Niño played a significant role in 2023 ending as the warmest year ever recorded.

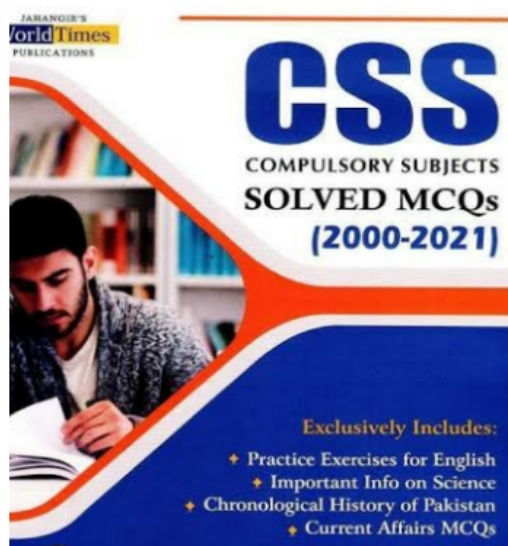
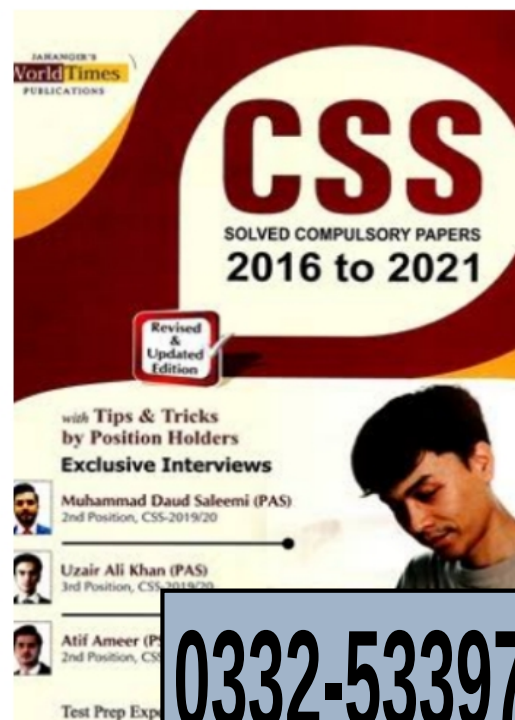
What does the peaking and weakening of El Niño mean?

The intensity of an El Niño event is measured by the temperature values recorded over the sea along the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

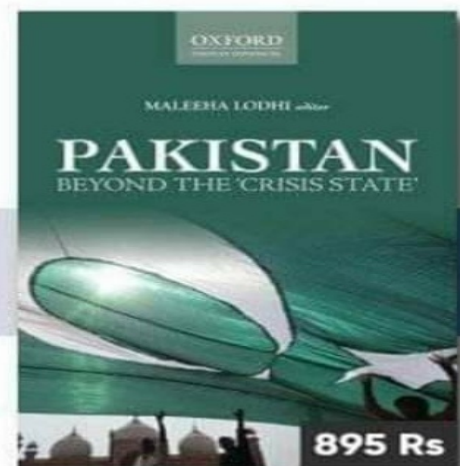
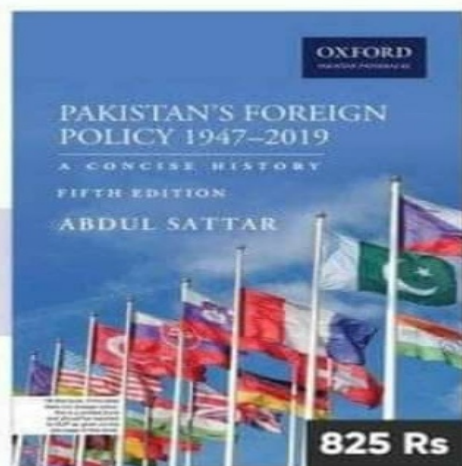
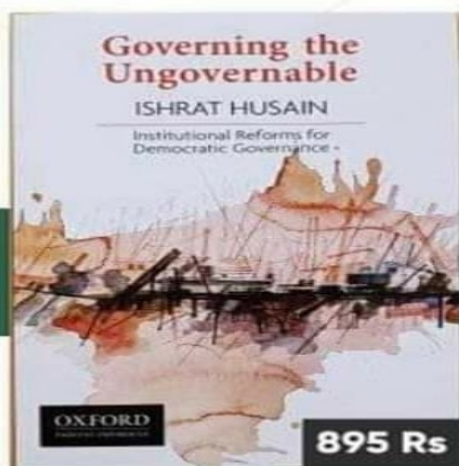
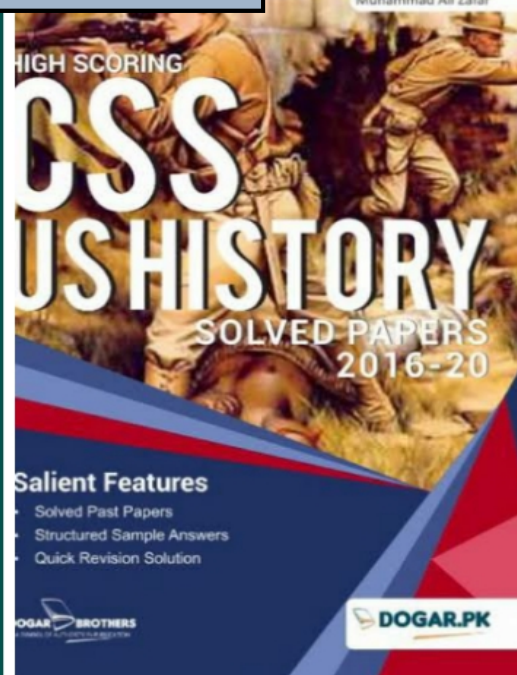
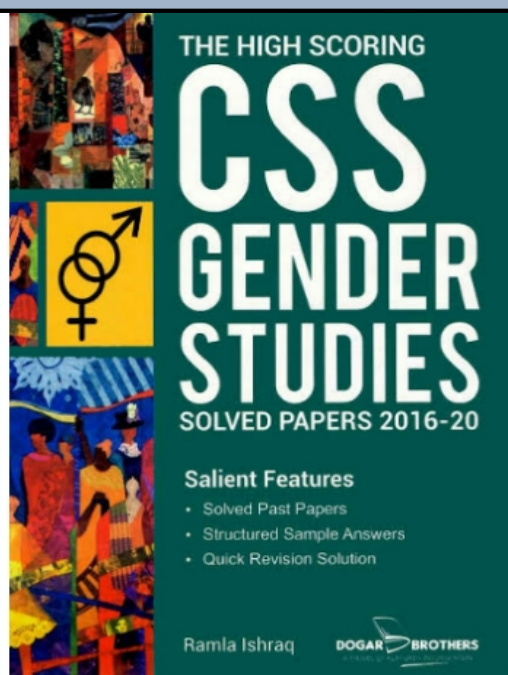
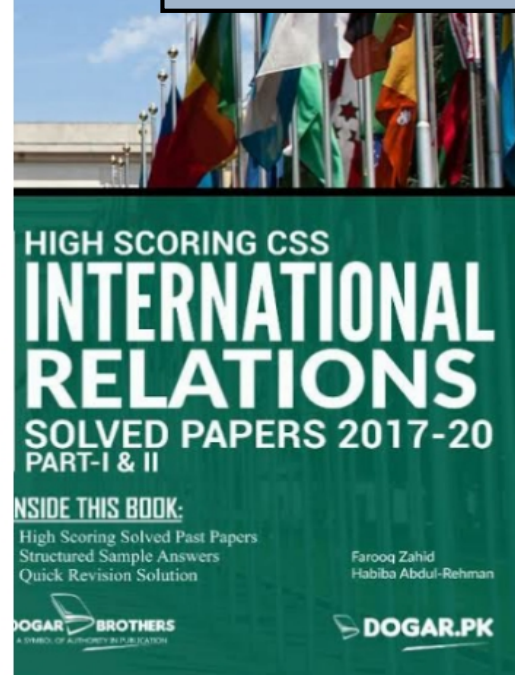
One of the key indicators of sea surface temperatures is the Oceanic Niño Indices (ONI) values (in degrees Celsius). Data from the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) show that after peaking at 2 degree Celsius during November-January, the ONI value has started to decline. The timing of the fall in ONI is important because it suggests



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Governing The Ungovernable

Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2019

Pakistan Beyond The Crisis State

INTERNATIONAL

that the El Niño will not extend into another year.

Impact on Pakistan

The impacts of El Niño on climate in Pakistan can vary, but generally, it can lead to drier than normal conditions in the region. Here are some of the potential effects:

Monsoon Rainfall: During El Niño years, Pakistan can experience variations in monsoon rainfall patterns. The monsoon rains may be below average or delayed, leading to drought conditions in certain regions. This can affect agriculture, water availability and the overall economy, as agriculture is a vital sector in Pakistan.

Temperature: El Niño can contribute to increased temperatures in Pakistan. The reduced cloud cover and rainfall during the weakened monsoon can result in hotter conditions, exacerbating heatwaves and posing risks to human health, especially in urban areas.

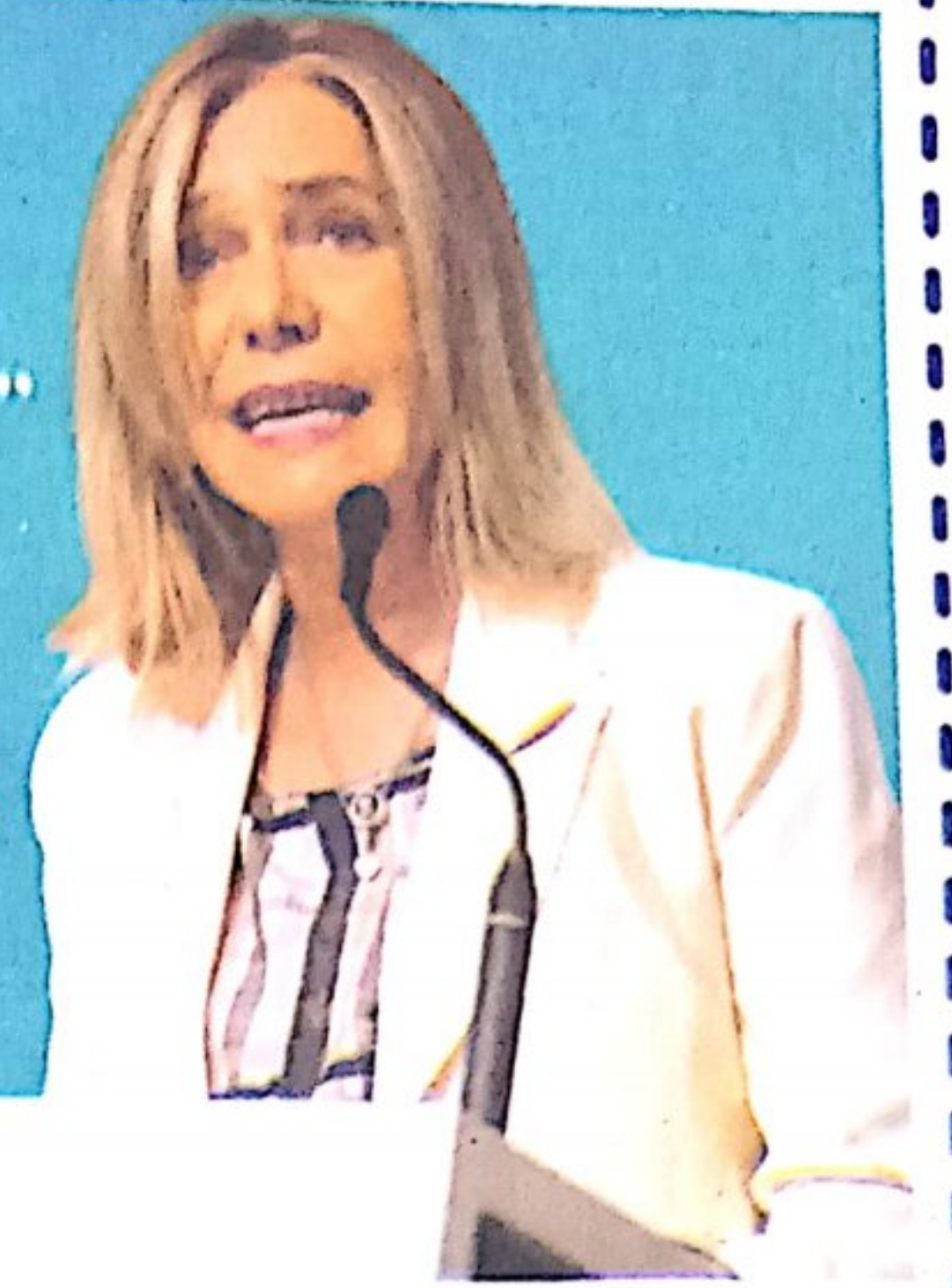
Glacial Melt and Water Resources: Pakistan heavily relies on glacial meltwater from the Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalayan (HKH) region for its water supply. During El Niño events, the variability in monsoon rainfall can impact the glacial melt rates. Changes in precipitation patterns and temperature can affect the timing and quantity of water availability, which can have implications for agriculture, hydropower generation, and overall water security in the country.

Flooding and Droughts: As with other South Asian countries, El Niño can disrupt the normal rainfall patterns in Pakistan. The weakened monsoon may result in reduced overall rainfall, leading to droughts and water scarcity in certain regions. Conversely, when the monsoon does arrive, it can bring intense and concentrated rainfall, leading to flash floods and the potential for damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and human settlements.

Biodiversity Loss: Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns can disrupt habitats, leading to shifts in species distribution, loss of biodiversity and increased vulnerability for endemic and endangered

"2024
could be
even hotter."

Prof Celeste Saulo
Secretary-General of WMO



species. This loss of biodiversity can have ecological, economic and cultural impacts in Pakistan.

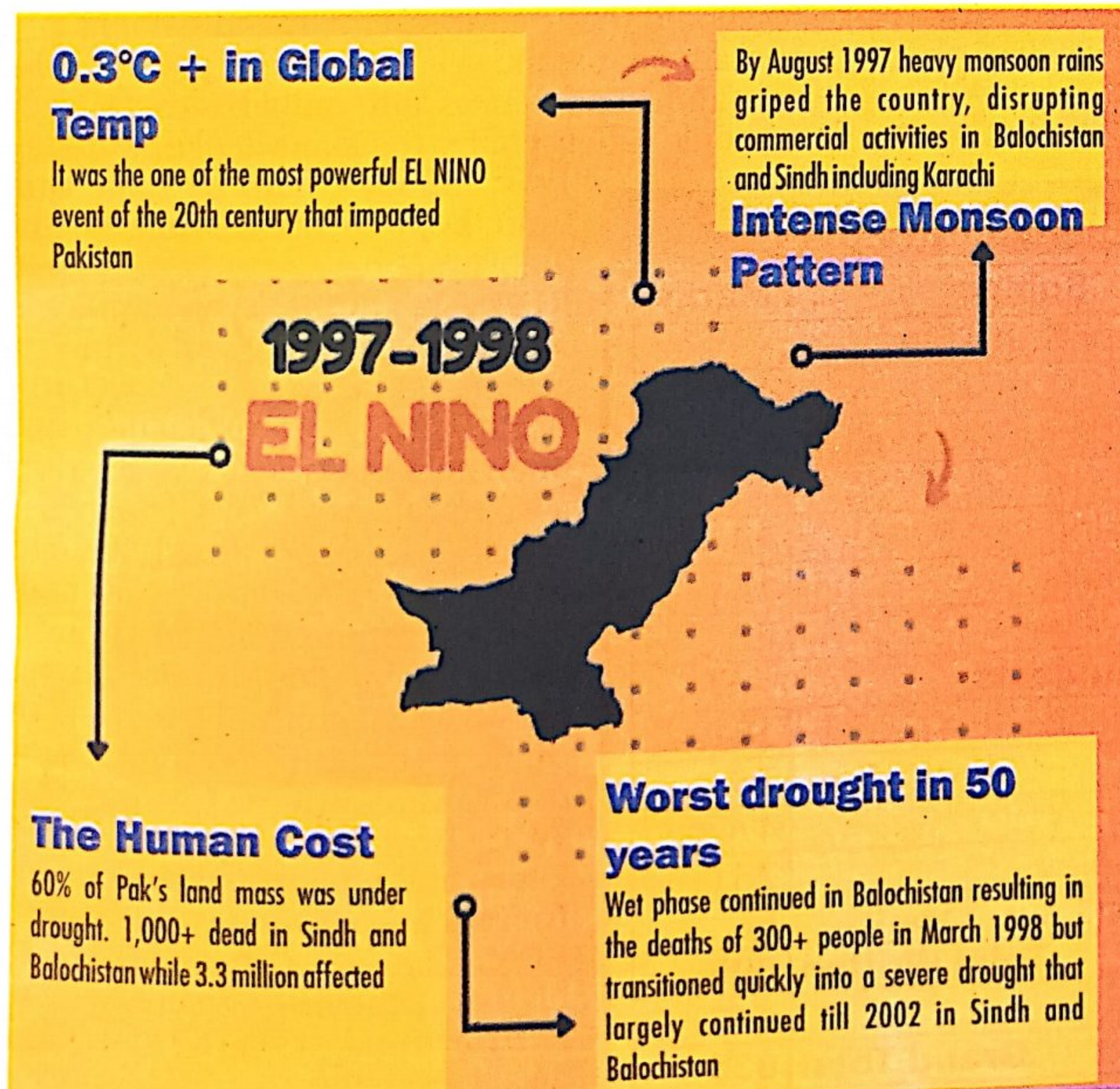
Policy Options for Pakistan

- Urgency of climate action through increased awareness and concerted efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, particularly in vulnerable areas such as water management, agriculture and disaster risk reduction.
- Making robust policy frameworks and legislation to address climate change by enacting laws and regulations that promote sustainable development, climate resilience and the transition to clean energy sources.
- Engaging in international cooperation and collaboration with global partners, including sharing knowledge, technology and financial resources to support Pakistan's efforts in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Ensuring 'climate justice' with emphasis on the importance of addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of marginalised communities and ensuring their equitable participation in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Conclusion

It is important to note that while El Niño is a significant factor, it is not the sole determinant of climate variability in Pakistan. Other regional and local factors can also influence the weather patterns, and the impacts of El Niño can vary from event to event. The Government of Pakistan and various organisations need to actively work to address the challenges of climate change through policy measures, adaptation strategies, and mitigation efforts. However, the scale of the issue requires continuous international cooperation and concerted efforts to mitigate the causes and adapt to the changing climate. ■

The writer is a student of Environmental Science at PU, Lahore.



“I remained attached to WTI throughout my preparation, reading all its publications and joining every test series. The journey culminated so marvellously that I ended up getting allocated to the prestigious Pakistan Administrative Service”

In Conversation with **Rab Dino Maitlo (PAS)** 77th in Pakistan; CSS 2022-23



JWT Edit. Board

Jahangir's World Times (JWT): First of all, please tell us about your educational background.

Rab Dino Maitlo (RDM): I did my matriculation from the “Academy of Excellence” and Intermediate from “Bahria Foundation College”. Later, I graduated in Petroleum and Natural Gas from Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, SZAB Campus.

JWT: How was your experience at the World Times Institute?

RDM: As far as CSS is concerned, I would say that WTI is my alma mater, for it is the esteemed institute where I started my journey. I remained attached to WTI throughout my preparation, reading all its publications and joining every test series. The journey culminated so marvellously that I ended up getting allocated to the prestigious Pakistan Administrative Service.

JWT: What was the significance of newspaper reading in your preparation? How did staying updated with current affairs shape your success?

RDM: Reading newspapers is crucial for CSS preparation; it not only keeps an aspirant updated on contemporary national and international developments but also keeps refining his/her grip on the English language.

JWT: What was your overall strategy for cracking the CSS exam?

RDM: Firstly, I had an impeccable belief that, one day, I would ultimately succeed. It always kept me moving on with a sharp focus despite all the uncertainties that are part and parcel of this journey. Secondly, I followed a precise yet productive strategy that gave me confidence. Lastly, it became possible with unrelenting prayers of my parents and the blessings of Allah Almighty.

JWT: What was your approach to time management throughout the preparation process? How did you balance multiple subjects and cover the vast syllabus?

RDM: I always had one thought in my mind: “carpe diem” (seize the day). As for time management, I used to sit in library and take one subject at a time. Unless I had covered that subject with entirety, I did not move on to the next subject. This imbued in my mind a sense of overall progress I was making and pushed me to put in more effort.

JWT: How should the answers be written to get maximum marks?

RDM: A good answer should have the following features:

- It should be relevant, imbued with quality content and effective critical analysis;
- It should be well presented and should also contain maps, flowcharts, diagrams, examples, quotations, references and comparisons.
- It should reflect your strong knowledge base.

JWT: Should there be some word limit kept in mind while writing answers?

RDM: On the basis of my intense written practice and having attempted CSS two consecutive times, I firmly believe that the length of an answer does matter. If writing a comprehensive answer can help you secure one extra mark, it is more than worth the effort, given the intense competition for winning allocation in one's desired group. However, compromising on the quality of the content is an unforgivable offense.

JWT: How did you structure your Essay and what was your strategy for Précis and Composition paper?

RDM: The Essay that I wrote was “Human Development and Economic Sustainability”. I deciphered the topic by analyzing how developing human resource

Detailed Marks Sheet

Subject	Marks
Compulsory Subjects	
Essay	40
English Précis & Composition	54
GSA	68
Current Affairs	49
Pakistan Affairs	12
Islamiat	62
Optional Subjects	
Political Science	151
Sindhi	76
History of USA	47
Gender Studies	75
International Law	56
Total Written	690
Viva Voce	145
Grand Total	835

INTERVIEW

leads to economic sustainability and vice versa. For Précis and Composition, I would say that an aspirant should never be afraid of this paper, for it provides sufficient room to qualify easily if (s)he is well versed in the English language and has efficiently prepared for all the parts of this paper.

JWT: What, in your opinion, is the key to making a difference in written part of the CSS exam?

RDM: It always requires a bit extra effort to stand apart. However, working rigorously without an effective strategy may not yield the desired results. In CSS, success hinges on the delicate equilibrium of hard work, strategic thinking, unwavering confidence and adept presentation. While covering entire syllabus is imperative, one must reach such level of preparation that one becomes proficient enough to identify beforehand the areas of syllabus which could be asked by the examiner.

JWT: Generally, compulsory subjects are considered low-scoring, what was your strategy to get through these very papers?

RDM: It's a myth that a person cannot secure good marks in compulsory subjects as by comprehensively attempting these papers, a person can get good results. In fact, this is the area where anyone can outsmart others. Islamic Studies, Pakistan Affairs, Current affairs, General Science & Ability, and even Précis and Composition paper can attract optimal marks.

JWT: How should a new aspirant start his/her preparations?

RDM: At the outset, it is important to look into the syllabus and past papers to understand the nature of the exam. Then, it is important to have a good guiding source. While joining an academy is not imperative, I would still recommend that you should join one for an effective and precise preparation. I joined World Times



Institute and it immensely helped me to prepare in a proper way; building my capacity to work smartly. The WTI not only defines the framework as to how to crack CSS, but also provides you with experienced teachers and intelligent colleagues who then help you in various ways.

JWT: What should be an ideal time table for a new aspirant to make sound preparation for CSS exam?

RDM: Since competition in CSS has become stiff, 10-12 months of focused time should be dedicated to its preparation. This much preparation will make an aspirant confident and capable of securing 700+ marks in the written part.

JWT: What areas should the new aspirants focus while preparing for the CSS exam?

RDM: There are three things that are crucial for cracking this exam:

- Discipline.
- Proficiency in the English language.
- Strong knowledge base.

JWT: What's the importance of revision in your preparation strategy? How did you manage to revise effectively while covering such a vast syllabus?

RDM: The significance of thorough revision cannot be undermined in CSS. Managing two papers daily is inherently a challenging task, and yet, there is an additional demand of revising the entire syllabus for each paper. So, the key is to make one-liner notes for every subject so that entire subject could be revised within 60 to 90 minutes. ■

My Interview Experience

For my interview preparation also, I joined WTI. Its Interview Session is a memorable part of my CSS journey as it helped me to learn how to structure my answers and also imparted me the skills to eloquently present those. I had a number of mock sessions, which gave me confidence and enabled me to work on my grey areas. Lastly, psychological preparation at WTI was a guiding light for me to sail through this critical part very smoothly.

Rapid Fire

Your inspiration	My father
Attempts	02
Qualification	BE (Petroleum Engineering)
Alma mater	Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (Khairpur Mirs campus)
Schooling medium	English
Your study schedule	10 hours a day
Your sources	FPSC-recommended books, JWT and The Economist
Academy or Institute you joined	World Times Institute (for Interview)
Group preferences	1. PAS 2. PSP 3. PCS
Why PAS?	It is a versatile service that enables a person to not only refine his personal and professional skills but also contribute extensively to greater public interest.
Hobbies	Reading books, jogging
Fave personality(ies)	Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
Fave book	Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet by Karen Armstrong
Fave quote	"Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me." — Carol Burnett
Secret of your success	Hope, hard work, perseverance.
Your role model	My parents

My tips on:

Selection of optional subjects

Following criteria should be considered:

- Personal interest
- Scoring trend
- Social significance and preciseness of the syllabus

Notes-making

I made three types of notes:

- Long
- Small
- One-liner

Advice for fresh aspirants

- Have self-belief.
- Work hard.
- Leave the rest to Allah Almighty.

The Road to Economic Stability

Sajad Jatoi

With the inauguration of a new government in the wake of the 2024 elections, the political uncertainty that has been vexing Pakistanis for the last many months has come to an end. However, the clouds of another economic crisis still hover over Pakistan. The state of affairs has necessitated that the country's economic managers approach the IMF for yet another bailout package.

This situation raises some pertinent questions: how long will Pakistan continue to seek assistance from multilateral lending agencies such as the IMF? And will the country ever be able to resolve its crisis once and for all?

The questions are quite tricky to answer. Undoubtedly, there's some glimmer of optimism in the two major political parties that have come to power. However, to say that Pakistan will be able to overcome its crisis will be simplistic and overly optimistic. This is because history makes it quite disbelieving that the country will be able to resolve its long-festering economic woes.

Historically, Pakistan has gone to the IMF over 23 times. The first time the country went into an IMF program was in 1958. Since then, it has hardly completed any single IMF program; for the leadership of the country has the dubious distinction of reneging on its commitments made to the IMF while getting the program, after the disbursement of the money. To illustrate, Pakistan was undergoing one of its worst economic crises just weeks before the PDM government came to power after the ouster of PTI government through a no-confidence vote. The PTI government, despite being aware of Pakistan's economic challenges, had decided to provide petrol and diesel to the people at subsidized prices. This not only eroded the IMF's confidence in Pakistan's political leadership but also led to severe economic problems for the incoming government.

So, the issue is that Pakistan has rarely been committed to implementing structural adjustment programmes recommended by the IMF. Undoubtedly, one can have numerous reservations about those IMF-prescribed recommendations, but one cannot solely blame the IMF for Pakistan's continued economic problems. This is because the country has never fully implemented those programmes in letter and spirit.

If history is anything to go by, it seems that Pakistan will follow the same trajectory. It will eventually sign an agreement with the IMF to get much-needed breathing space. As a direct consequence of entering into the agreement, inflation will surge. As energy prices soar, so will indirect, regressive taxes.

Now, what exactly should Pakistan do to come out of this crisis once and for all? The answer may be simple, but not that easy. To resolve this crisis, the country will have to take both long-term and short-term measures.

The long-term measures should include:



1) Resolving the energy crisis by either transitioning to renewable energy resources or through ensuring a steady supply of energy through fossil fuels.

2) Attracting foreign direct investment by improving the ease of doing business in the country through streamlining the entire process involved in opening a new business. This can be achieved by making the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) effective and ending red tape by providing one-window services.

3) Increasing exports by transitioning from import substitution to export orientation and by focusing on high-value exports such as IT and pharmaceuticals (Pakistan's exports are heavily tilted towards textiles as the country, as per SBP, fetched 13 billion dollars through textile exports in 2023).

4) Improving governance by combating corruption through enhanced transparency and effective accountability laws. Also, countering the resurgence of terrorism through the implementation of a national action plan.

The short-term measures should include:

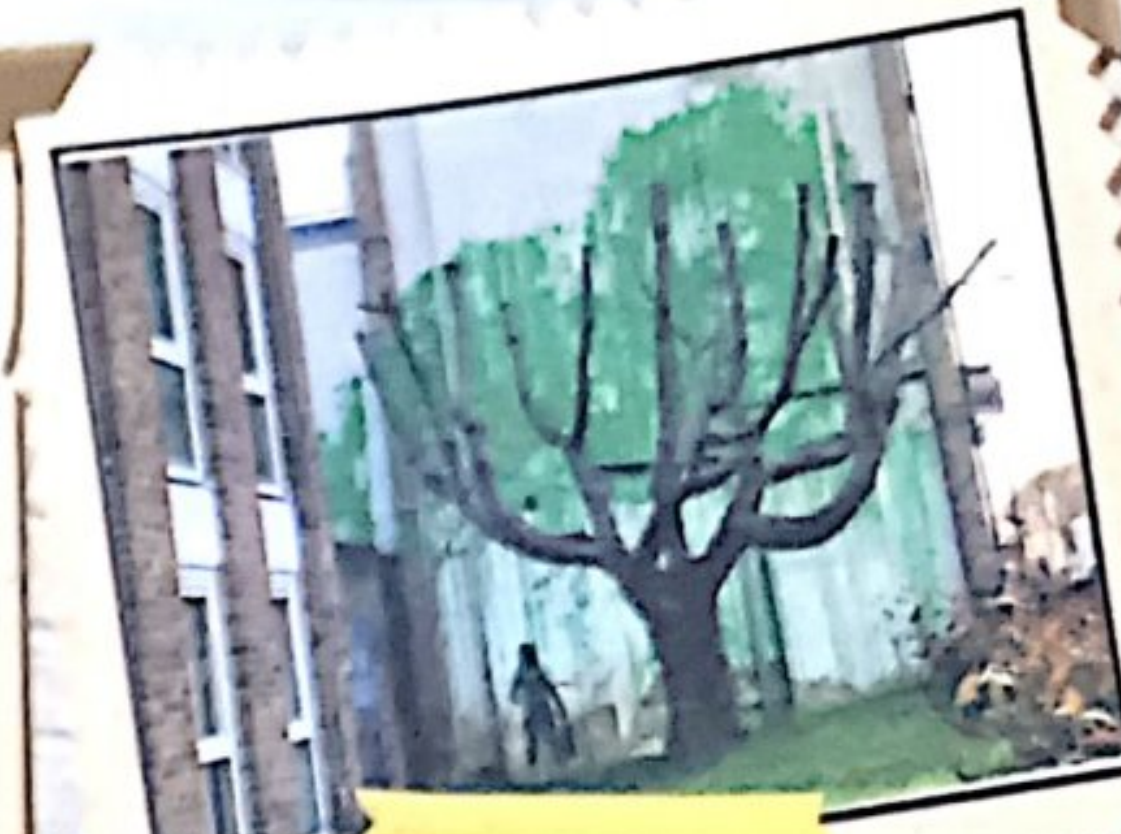
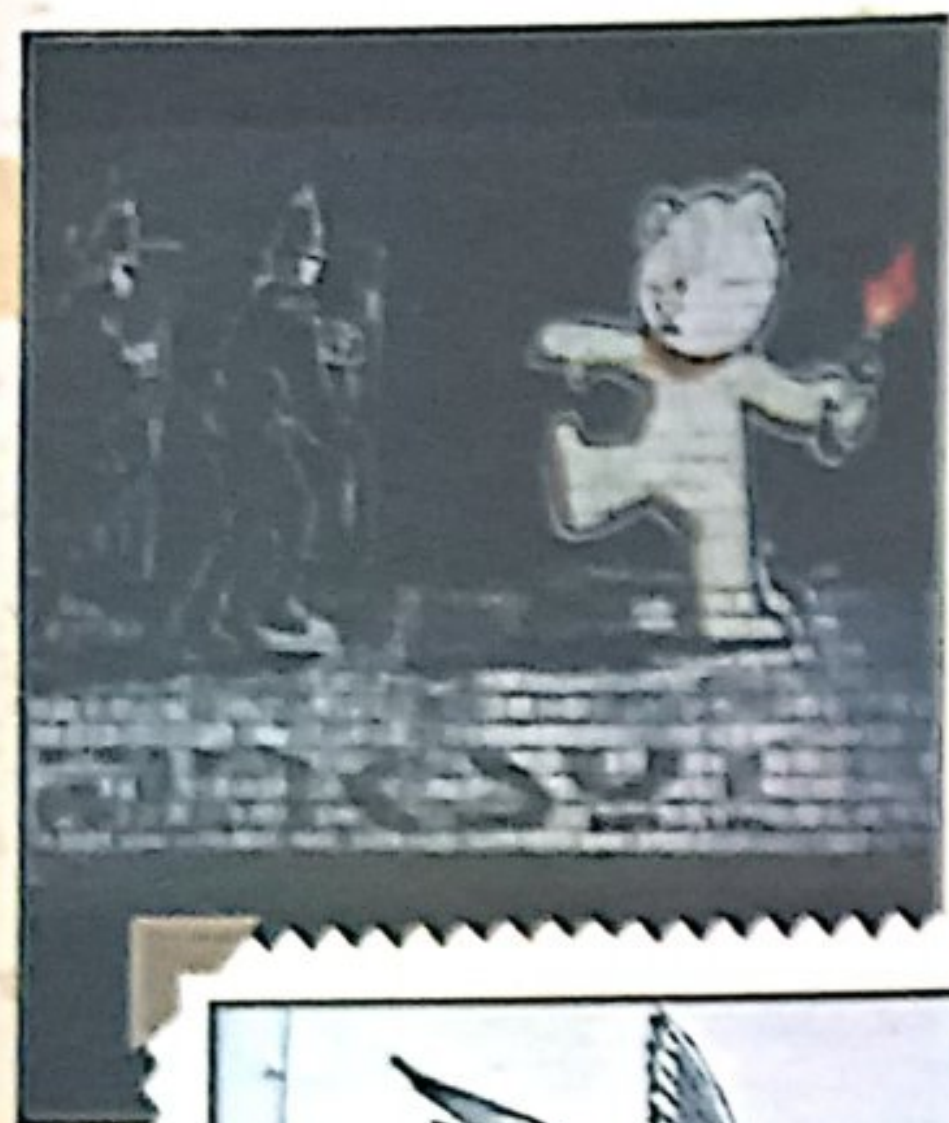
1) Rebalancing the fiscal account through raising the tax-to-GDP ratio through expanding the tax base, taxing agriculture and bringing retailers into the tax net.

2) Rebalancing fiscal expenditure by privatizing state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that are eating up billions of rupees on an annual basis (According to the SBP, these enterprises incurred losses worth 1.4 trillion in the year 2023).

3) Strengthening social safety programs such as BISP and Sehat Card.

In conclusion, while the installation of a new government does offer some hope, Pakistan's economic challenges persist. To break free from perpetual crises, short-term fiscal measures and long-term structural reforms are essential. By drawing up pragmatic solutions, Pakistan can move towards stability and prosperity. The road ahead may be daunting, but with political will and decisive action, the country can overcome its economic challenges once and for all. ■

The writer is a freelance columnist.



Waqar ul Hassan

Recently, a piece of art featuring a lifesize depiction of a woman holding a pressure washer, having apparently sprayed green paint up the side of a block of flats, appeared on the side of a building in north London. Viewed with the tree in the foreground and centred on the wall, the green paint mimics the foliage of the plant, which has been cut back in a process known as pollarding. The style of the artwork made people believe that the artist behind it was Banksy - a contemporary British street artist and activist who, despite his international fame, has maintained an anonymous identity - and he later confirmed in a social media post that it was his work. A hero to some, a vandal to others, Banksy is often described as "elusive" and "secretive" by the press. Many have tried to guess who the artist is and the general assumption is that he lives in or near Bristol, but other than that, very little was known about him.

Nonetheless, Banksy is believed to have been born in the town of Yate, in South Gloucestershire, in the early 1970s. He rose to prominence after he began spray-painting his now-trademark stencilled designs around Bristol in the early 1990s. The city's influential music and arts scene is said to have inspired his work. His first large stencil mural - The Mild Mild West - which depicts a teddy bear throwing a Molotov cocktail at three riot police, was painted in the Stokes Croft area of Bristol in 1999.

By the mid-2000s, Banksy was becoming a celebrity himself - albeit an anonymous one. Simultaneously, his works became more ambitious, popping up in cities all over the world. The appearance of a new Banksy soon started to become a media event. His mythical status as the masked artist poking fun at authority brought

Banksy

The mystery artist

him - or at least his brand - international recognition.

Exhibitions of his work, in cities including Los Angeles and London, became sell-out events. His often politically-charged works began to sell for huge amounts of money.

Since emerging on the scene in the early 1990s, Banksy has always chosen to keep his identity a mystery - often wearing masks in the rare interviews he does. He also never reveals the place he will be doing his next artwork, which is often only noticed after members of the public circulate them on social media.

His intentional anonymity allowed him to operate without facing legal repercussions for his often unauthorised street art, which can be considered vandalism in some jurisdictions. It also allowed him to operate however he pleases without the

fear of being followed by fans or the media.

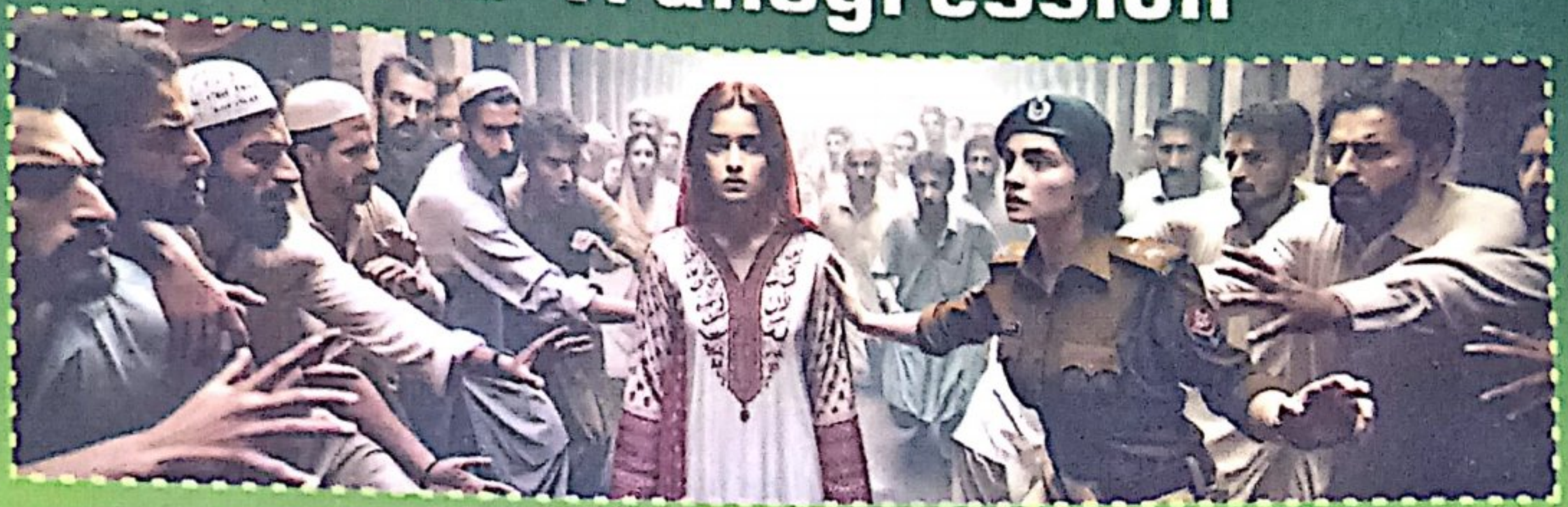
Aimed as a form of cultural criticism, the 'guerrilla street artist' often targets established social and political agendas with his witty illustrations produced with stencils and spray paint in cities such as New Orleans, New York, and Paris. He counts numerous A-list celebrities among his fans and collectors and his artworks sell for eye-watering sums, with councils and landowners rushing to profit from - or whitewash - buildings chosen as his latest canvas. And yet, the self-styled prankster and anti-establishment figure has consistently managed to remain anonymous. Banksy generates income through various means, despite his anonymous persona and unconventional approach. Part of his persona even rejects the concept of "commercial success" and has in the past encouraged people not to buy his work.

The writer is a member of staff.



GENERAL

Blasphemy, Intolerance and Transgression



A few days ago, we were confronted with news from Lahore about a courageous female police officer, ASP Syeda Shehar Bano, rescuing a young woman from a hostile mob that had intended to harm her for wearing a dress they perceived as desecration of the holy Qur'an. But, in fact, the dress was designed by a Kuwait-based brand, with some Arabic words calligraphically printed on it. The girl involved wore this dress as a new fashion item, defying the common clichéd mentality of "what will people say?". In a country like Pakistan, where a murder can be expected within a fraction of seconds if someone is just accused of blasphemy, the girl must have thought a hundred times before taking such a step. Nonetheless, this isn't what I want to discuss; rather I just want to highlight some common facts that could be the root cause of such happenings.

Ijaz Ahmed

The only problem was that it was written in Arabic and our poor 'Cultural Muslims' misjudged it as a Quranic verse and blamed the girl with the blasphemy of Quran and considered her "*Wajib-ul-Qatal*". These sentimental people look at the Arabic morphology as Quranic verses. In order to avoid any such incident in future, we need to

The first thing is whether the attempt by the mob to harm that girl was legitimate? The answer is a big NO. In Pakistan, there is a proper criminal justice system in place, where such issues can be aptly handled. If someone attempts to manipulate the ethics of our beloved religion, we must make him face the law. We must not take the law into our own hands and kill him/her on a mere allegation that is yet to be proved. We don't have the liberty to slaughter them or destroy their religious books and buildings. The court is there to decide their fate. Islam teaches us patience and tolerance.

In Pakistan, the controversial term "*Wajib-ul-Qatal*" (worthy of being killed) is commonplace, though it is an oft-repeated blunder. The most unfortunate is the fact that many of our religious scholars are behind this provocative campaign. They mistakenly misinterpret but successfully implant the mantra of "*Wajib-ul-Qatal*" in the minds of poor, illiterate people. On the other hand, those who do not subscribe to this misinterpretation have miserably failed to convince people that ours is a religion of peace and that our beloved Holy Prophet (SAAW) always encouraged patience, tolerance and peace. Allah Almighty says in Surah al-Maidah: "[W]hoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely." (Al-Quran; 5:32)

The latter part of the same verse says, "And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely." So, why shouldn't we go for the latter one? Why

we shouldn't invite our generation to the optimistic ideologies of our religion as professed by Prophet Muhammad (SAAW), instead of satanic ideologies.

I believe there is no need for any other discourse to spurn extremist actions over a petty issue.

Had the plan of the hostile mob to harm that girl been successfully executed, the Islamophobic forces could have capitalized on it and used this incident to defame Islam.

In our socio-cultural milieu, there are two types of Muslims: Cultural Muslims and Convictional Muslims and those falling into the former category are what we can call the 'chief facilitators of religious crises'. In simple words, they portray themselves as more religious, devoted and pious. But, in reality, they are as far from Islam as they pretend to be close to it. They are perilous for the morality of Islam. They even kill an innocent person in the name of love for and safeguarding Islam, Quran and Prophet Muhammad (SAAW). But, in reality, they have not read and understood the meanings of Quran and they barely know the actual commandments of Islam.

On the other hand, Convictional Muslims limit themselves to the commands and teachings of Islam. They pray just for their easiness on the Day of Judgment.

Ignorance is at its peak in Pakistan. The words written on girl's dress were not any Quranic verse but some phrases which are translated as "the life is beautiful" or something like that.

make our people understand that Arabic is just a language just like English, French or Urdu. Moreover, designers should also design clothes keeping in mind the traditional societal values of their client. For Pakistani customers, they should either write in Urdu or if it is in Arabic, it must be clear with translation. Islam invites to goodness and prohibits from evils.

In the Western world, printing flags or religious words on dresses is common. So far, we have embraced their fashion style and culture. If the laxity of the Islamic world in accepting Western values continues, our religious ethics will soon mingle up. We should take so-called blasphemous happenings, as the one in Lahore, as an alarming sign of the downfall of Muslims.

Lastly, I have observed that ignorant individuals in our society exacerbate the situation by linking everything to negativity and evils. This ignorant mannerism of Pakistani people resulted in that chaos. We must avoid aligning everything with Islam. We should research thoroughly and analyze things rationally rather than emotionally. We need to follow an optimistic approach instead of a pessimist one. Otherwise, the mitigation of consequences would be impossible. Therefore, neither we should encourage wearing such dresses, nor we should appreciate such kind of reactions to that. Always take legal route and trust your judicial institutions. Long live Islam and Pakistan! ■

The writer is a CSS aspirant.



"WTI's interview session significantly contributed to my success as I was able to secure the highest marks in the final interview."

In Conversation with



Iftikhar Ali
(Assistant Commissioner)

JWT Edit. Board

Jahangir's World Times (JWT): First of all, please tell something about your educational background.

Iftikhar Ali (IA): After completing my early schooling in Skardu, I attended Cadet College, Petaro, for higher education. From there, I pursued my bachelor's degree in Industrial Electronics at NED-UET, Karachi. This educational journey has shaped me both academically and personally, fostering a strong determination to succeed and a passion for my field.

JWT: How helpful did you find Jahangir's World Times (JWT) in your preparation for the PMS exam?

IA: Although I couldn't join the World Times Institute (WTI) for preparation for the written exam, the books published by World Times Publications and its monthly magazine, JWT, proved to be immensely helpful in covering topics related to Current Affairs and Pakistan Affairs. I did join WTI's interview session and it significantly contributed to my success as I was able to secure the highest marks in the final interview. Based on my experience, I highly recommend WTI, especially for interview preparation, to all aspirants.

JWT: What was the significance of newspaper reading in your preparation? How did staying updated with current affairs shape your success?

IA: Newspaper reading played a crucial role in my preparation. Staying updated on current affairs through newspapers was not just a habit but a strategic necessity. It provided me with a comprehensive understanding of ongoing events, both national and international, which are pivotal components of the PMS exam. By consistently reading newspapers, I was able to familiarize myself with

various political, economic and social issues, thereby broadening my knowledge base. This awareness not only enriched my answers in the written exams but also helped me formulate well-informed opinions during the interview process.

JWT: What was your overall strategy for cracking the PMS exam?

IA: My approach was pretty straightforward:

- I focused my study on past papers; I identified recurring topics and prioritized them, while still covering the entire syllabus.
- Consistency was the key for me. I stuck to a study schedule, setting aside specific times daily to focus on different subjects, revise and do practice tests.
- Keeping abreast of what was happening in the world was crucial. I stayed glued to newspapers, online news sources and magazines to stay on top of current affairs.
- I spent a lot of time practicing past papers to get a feel for the format and types of questions.
- Mock tests were my best friend. They helped me gauge where I stood, what I needed to brush up on, and how to manage my time during the exam.
- Time management was the key to my success. I made sure I had enough time for each section of the paper and didn't leave any questions unanswered.
- I worked on making my answers clear, organized and to the point so the examiners would know exactly what I was talking about.
- Lastly, staying positive and confident was vital.

Detailed Marks Sheet

Subject	Marks
Compulsory Subjects	
English General & Essay	107
Urdu General & Essay	50
Current Affairs & Pakistan Affairs	84
Islamic Studies	120
Optional Subjects	
1. History of USA	95
2. International Law	108
Total Written	564
Viva Voce	265
Grand Total	829

INTERVIEW

Believing in myself and my preparation helped me keep my nerves and give my best.

JWT: What was your approach to time management throughout the preparation process? How did you balance multiple subjects and cover the vast syllabus?

IA: My approach to time management during preparation involved careful planning and prioritization:

- I created a study schedule that allocated specific time slots for each subject, ensuring I covered all subjects regularly.
- I divided the syllabus into manageable sections and set realistic goals for each study session.
- To maintain balance, I rotated between subjects to keep things fresh and avoid burnouts.
- Regular breaks were essential for maintaining concentration and avoiding mental fatigue.

JWT: What were the challenges you encountered during your preparation journey and the ways in which you overcame them?

IA: Following are some challenges that I faced during this journey:

- **Time management:** Created a detailed schedule, prioritized tasks and stuck to deadlines.
- **Information overload:** Broke down topics and focused on understanding concepts.
- **Motivation:** Set short-term goals, rewarded milestones and surrounded myself with supportive peers.
- **Exam anxiety:** Practiced relaxation techniques, visualized success and recalled past achievements.
- **Distractions:** Created a designated study space, turned off notifications, and set specific study hours.

JWT: How should answers be written to get maximum marks in the written part of the PMS exam?

IA: The following strategy can be very rewarding in this regard:

- **Understand the question:** Read carefully and identify the key terms.
- **Plan your answer:** Outline your response before writing.
- **Be clear and concise:** Avoid verbosity.
- **Provide relevant examples:** Support with facts and evidence.
- **Use proper formatting:** Organize with headings and paragraphs.
- **Manage time effectively:** Allocate time wisely to each question.

JWT: How did you structure your Essay?

IA: My strategy for Essay was:

Outline:

Introduction

- Started with an engaging introduction.
- Provided background and state your thesis.

Body Paragraphs:

My Interview Experience

My interview experience was conducted in a friendly environment. I think, it's crucial to have clarity on which group you're interested in and why. Providing clear and concise answers is essential as is maintaining confidence even if you miss some questions. Despite dropping 30-35 percent of the questions, I remained calm and composed throughout.

- Developed main arguments in separate paragraphs.
- Supported with evidence and examples.
- Ensure smooth transitions.

Counterarguments (if applicable):

- Addressed opposing viewpoints.
- Refuted with logic or evidence.

Conclusion

- Summarized main points.
- Restated thesis and provide a concluding thought.

JWT: Should there be some word limit kept in mind while writing answers?

IA: Maintaining consistency in the length of your answers is pivotal for achieving success in the PMS exam. I suggest allotting 6-9 pages to a question, taking into account your writing speed.

JWT: As interviewers usually grill the interview candidates, how did you manage the situation?

IA: To prepare for the rigorous interviewing process, I enrolled in interview preparation sessions with WTI. The intense grilling sessions, especially in syndicate groups, proved to be invaluable. These sessions were even more challenging than the actual interviews, providing a robust environment to refine my responses and build confidence.

Additionally, participating in mini mock and full mock interviews offered realistic scenarios to hone my interview skills. Overall, the comprehensive preparation provided by WTI equipped me with the resilience and adaptability needed to effectively navigate the process.

JWT: Who deserves the credit for your success?

IA: My family, especially my father! ■

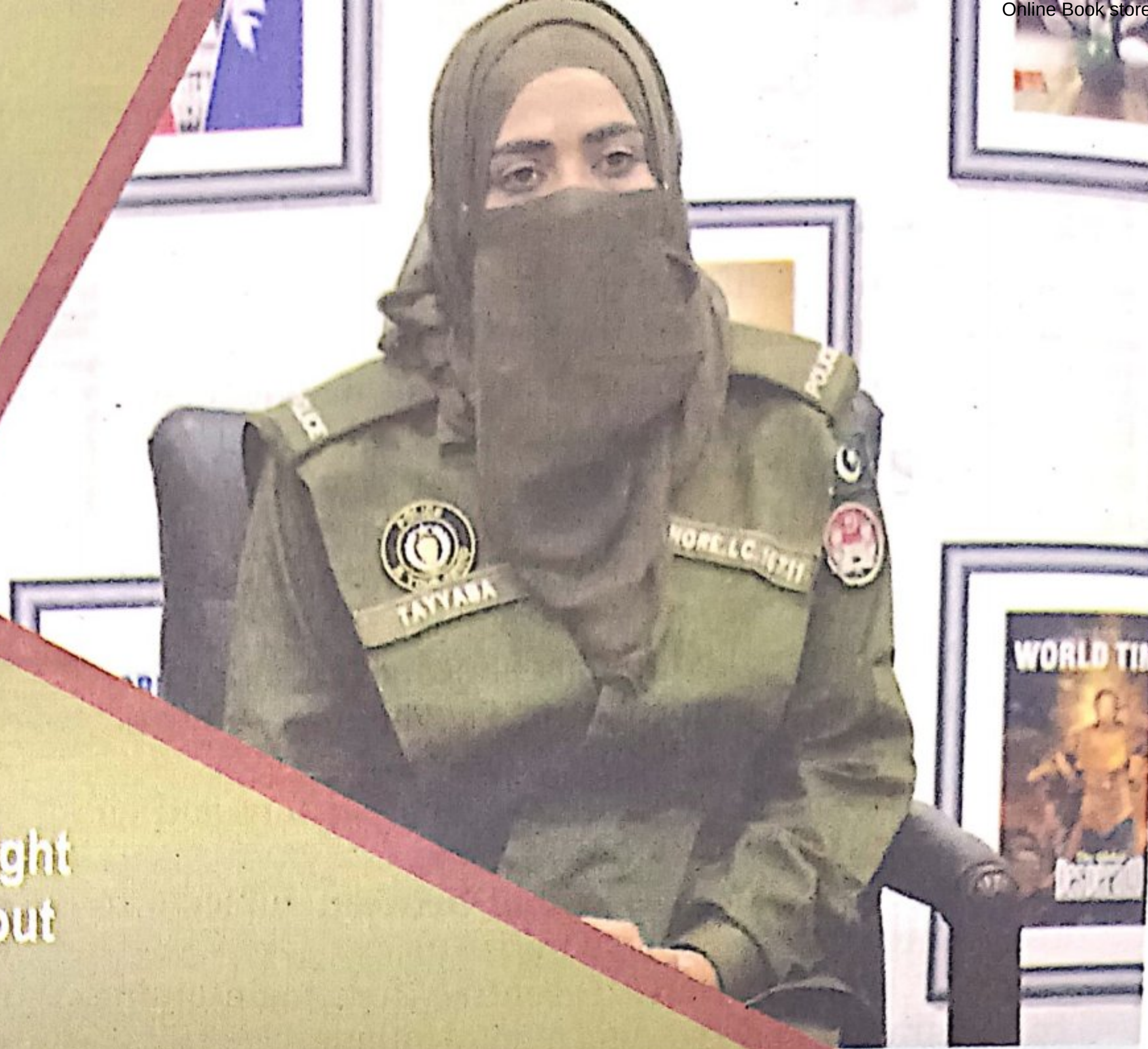
Rapid Fire

Your inspiration	My father
Attempts	01
Schooling medium	English
Your qualification	BE (Industrial Electronics)
Alma mater	NED-UET
Your study schedule	6 hours a day
Your sources	World Time magazine, international journals, YouTube, Google
Your hobbies	Playing chess
Your strength	Consistency
Fave personality	Allama Iqbal
Fave book	Allama Iqbal's Bang-e-Dra
Fave quote	"The only way to do great work is to love what you do." — Steve Jobs
Secret of your success	A strong belief in Allah Almighty
Your role model	My father

Tayyaba Hussain

Sub Inspector
(Punjab Police)

"World Times magazine gave me the right direction to start my preparation without going to any institute or academy"



Jahangir's World Times (JWT): Please tell us about your educational background.

Tayyaba Hussain (TH): I am very thankful to Allah Almighty that I was born into an educated family. My father was a schoolteacher. Being inspired by my father, I developed a love for education at an early age. I started my education at Govt. Higher Secondary School, Barki, and passed matriculation and intermediate exams from there, securing excellent marks. I continued further studies as a private candidate and graduated from the University of the Punjab and then got a master's degree in Political Science.

JWT: How long did it take you to prepare for Sub Inspector (Punjab Police) exam?

TH: I started preparing for competitive exams in 2019 when I applied for the post of Sub Inspector in Punjab Police. At that time, I did not join any academy or institute; rather, I focused on my weak areas until the final date of the exam was announced. In December 2021, I joined the World Times Institute to give a final touch to my preparation for this exam.

JWT: What were your principal sources for the preparation for this exam?

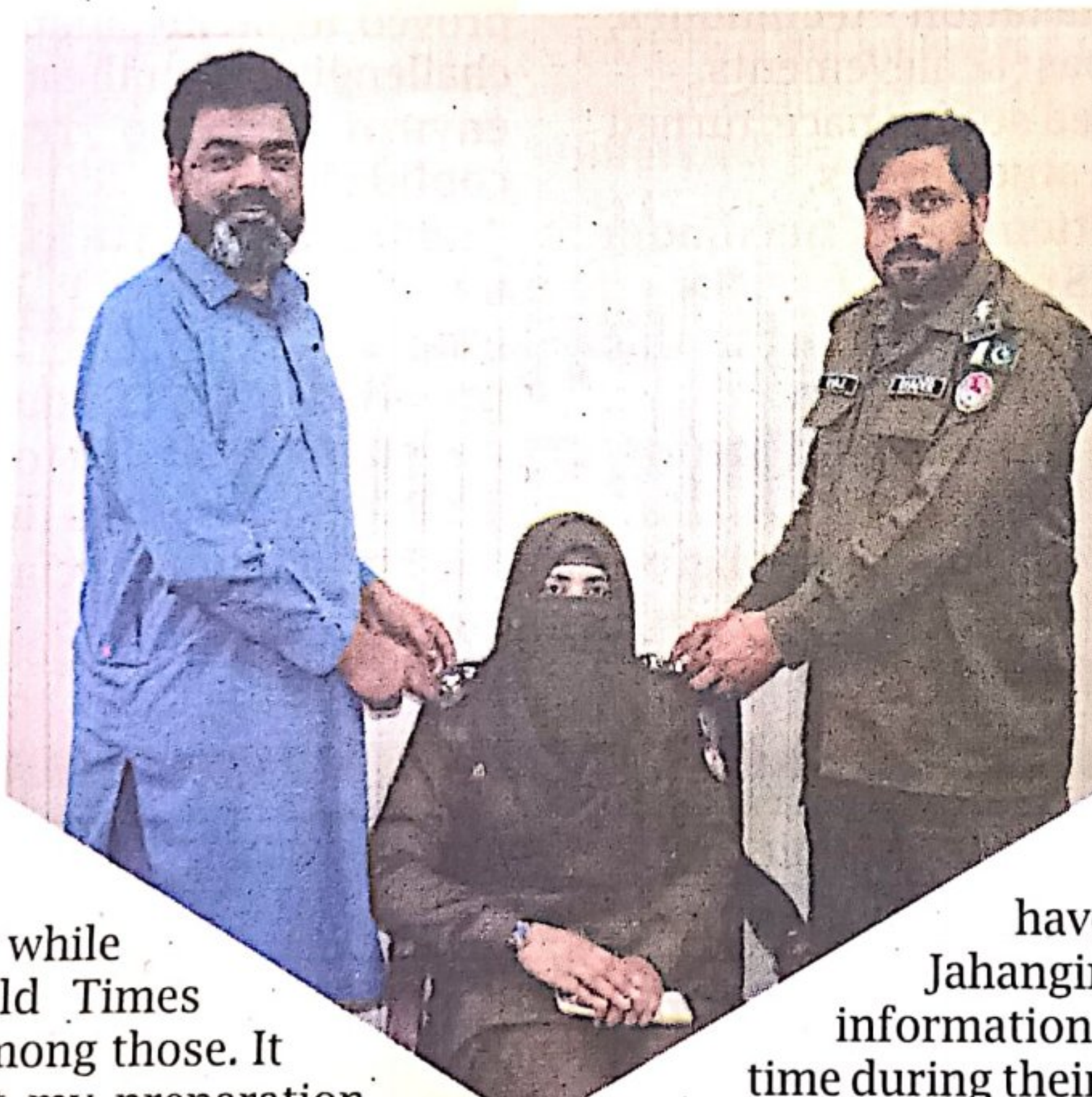
TH: I consulted many resources while preparing for this exam and World Times magazine was the most important among those. It gave me the right direction to start my preparation without going to any institute or academy. Moreover, some YouTube channels also proved helpful in my studies.

JWT: How helpful was Jahangir's World Times during your preparations?

TH: JWT polished my skills and built my confidence to take this exam.

JWT: How was your experience at the World Times Institute?

TH: It was really a great experience! The teachers there were highly experienced and professional. They were always ready to help and guide me whenever I faced a problem in my studies. The way they deal with the students is exemplary. The most inspiring thing about the teachers is that they are always ready to satisfy every single student beyond the time limit, which shows their great professionalism and strong dedication.



JWT Edit. Board

JWT: How should new aspirants start preparations for the various one-paper exams?

TH: They must have a strong grip on their relevant subjects. They should join WTI to overcome their deficiencies. Also, they should consult good GK books by various authors and try to cover all the important portions, i.e. English, Urdu, Geography, Pakistan Affairs, Islamiat, Physiography, Maths, etc.

JWT: What areas should they focus on?

TH: They must have a strong grip on the English language and grammar as the whole material that we go through to prepare for any competitive exam and the exam, too, is in English.

JWT: What is, in your opinion, an ideal timetable for a sound preparation?

TH: The preparation should be started at least one year before the exam.

JWT: What strategy should the in-job aspirants adopt as they have scant time at their disposal?

TH: It is, no doubt, always challenging for an in-job aspirant to manage time due to his/her hectic routine of work. The best strategy for them is that they must

have a book or a magazine, especially Jahangir's World Times, with them to seek information and knowledge even in a short, free time during their duties.

JWT: How did you handle the interview pressure while before the panel?

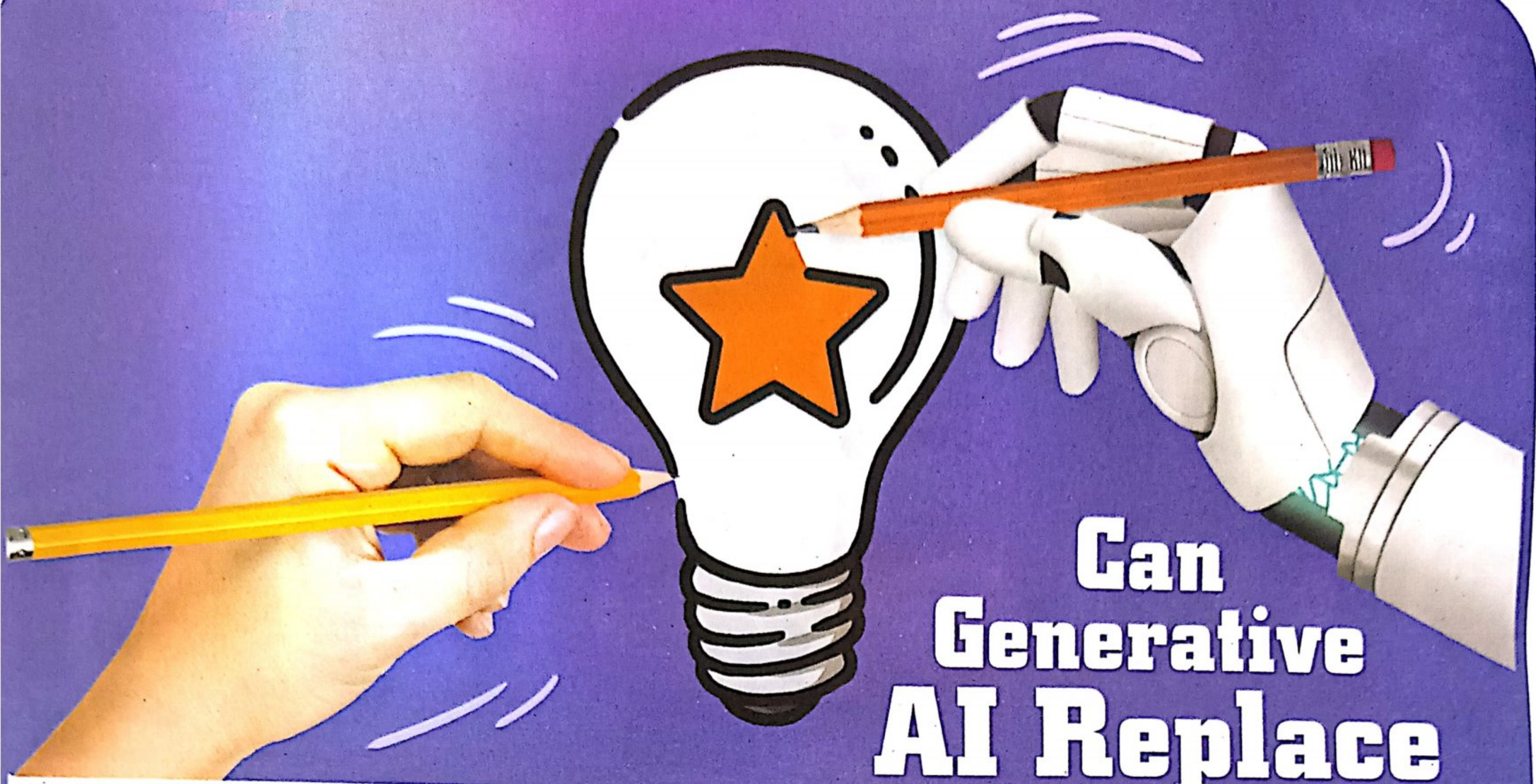
TH: The credit for my handling the interview pressure goes to the WTI mentors, as they instilled in me a great confidence to face the panel. Especially the demo interview classes, in which the country's best and most renowned officers were in front of me, enabled me to face the interviewers and answer their questions confidently.

JWT: Please share some questions the panellists asked during the interview.

TH: As I was a serving candidate, they asked me questions about my department and service.

JWT: On the basis of your experience, what tips would you give to prospective aspirants?

TH: The most important thing is that they should build confidence in themselves. 📌



Can
Generative
AI Replace

Human Creativity?

Exploring answers to the most important question of today

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made its mark on nearly every industry. Likewise, the impact of AI on the creative world, from virtual influencers and computer-generated music to AI-powered design tools, is evident. The past decade has seen several major advancements in AI technologies. Now, there's an AI for literally any computer application you can think of: Generative AI. It is one of the newest additions to the AI umbrella, and it's already taking the market by storm. But as AI technology continues to advance, there is a growing apprehension about the potential of generative AI—technologies that can create new content such as audio, text, images, and video—to replace people in many jobs. But one of the biggest opportunities generative AI offers to businesses and governments is to augment human creativity and overcome the challenges of democratizing innovation.

Dr. Sidratul Muntaha

The entry of Artificial Intelligence into the mainstream conversation is difficult to pinpoint, but the introduction of OpenAI's advanced language model, ChatGPT, in November 2022, definitely sparked widespread discourse and curiosity. In the words of American tech entrepreneur Aaron Levie, "ChatGPT is one of those rare moments in technology where you see a glimmer of how everything is going to be different going forward." Since its launch, this large language model-based chatbot has taken the world by storm. In recent months, we have witnessed the advent of many more generative AI tools that promise to enhance productivity, effectiveness and speed in business massively. Current generative AI algorithms show great potential for generating realistic images and

videos, composing music and writing human-like text. We are now able to generate diverse forms of content at the click of a button, such as complex text, music, images and more. As AI technology advances, it will eventually start creeping into the workplace, with experts predicting that AI may soon write, code and design better than human professionals in creative fields.

This article explores the potential of generative AI as a creative tool, the importance of human creativity and the dynamics between the two in shaping the future of work.

While there has been a broad consensus that AI will replace many analytical, knowledge-based tasks, professional roles and business functions, most experts have predicted that this would not apply to

work related to human creativity. Well, that was before the emergence of the latest GenAI tools.

Understanding generative AI

The main focus of generative AI, as the name suggests, is generating content. From writing books to composing music or creating unique images and even videos, its capabilities seem limitless.

But how does it generate all this content? Generative AI utilizes machine learning algorithms and training models with complex datasets. It is able to identify and extract patterns and structures from these datasets and can use this information to generate new content that aligns with the characteristics and patterns it observed previously.

Let's look at an example: If we ask ChatGPT to write a poem about the human brain, it will generate a unique text based on its training data, such as publicly available texts from books, articles, websites or other online content. Since ChatGPT is able to identify logical patterns and text structures, it can use this information to create a text that makes sense to readers.

This is exactly where generative AI lacks. It doesn't have subjective experiences and emotions and cannot draw upon personal perspectives and emotional nuances when creating content.

Generative AI can emulate artists and creators, but it cannot replace them because it lacks the depth and authenticity that human-made creation has. Artificial intelligence is, by definition, artificial. It is a simulation of human intelligence that thrives on using content that was generated by humans in the first place.

A further restriction that generative AI is currently facing is its limited data resources. ChatGPT, for instance, only has access to data available up until September 2021 and cannot extract information from any gated or subscription-based content or other restricted sources.

This lack of data and authenticity means that it cannot create truly original and thought-provoking content in the same way humans can.

Exploring human creativity

Defining human creativity has been a complex task for cognitive scientists, philosophers and thinkers alike. Philosopher Immanuel Kant viewed creativity as an inherent human ability to imagine, understand and create new concepts or experiences. Nelson Goodman makes a case for creativity as the ability to create and break the rules around us.

Creativity can also be something that is influenced by our environment. Exposure to diverse forms of art, musical instruments, social conditions, emotions, architecture and literature can impact the creativity and

inspiration of artists.

Likewise, creativity might also depend on the set of tools a doctor has while operating a patient. A doctor without access to electricity could use car batteries to charge a defibrillator or use vacuum suction to relieve pain. Even you, as a creative social media strategist, can create an interactive infographic to convey special messages to your audience. For humans, creativity can lead to boundless possibilities.

How creative is AI?

Computer programs are often perceived as creative as the humans creating them. But artificial intelligence and machines may be more creative at solving problems than we are. And why wouldn't they? We have programmed them to do so. Consider asking GPT-4 to write a creative blog. Writing an SEO-optimised blog and adding an original image that fits your needs will take less than thirty seconds.

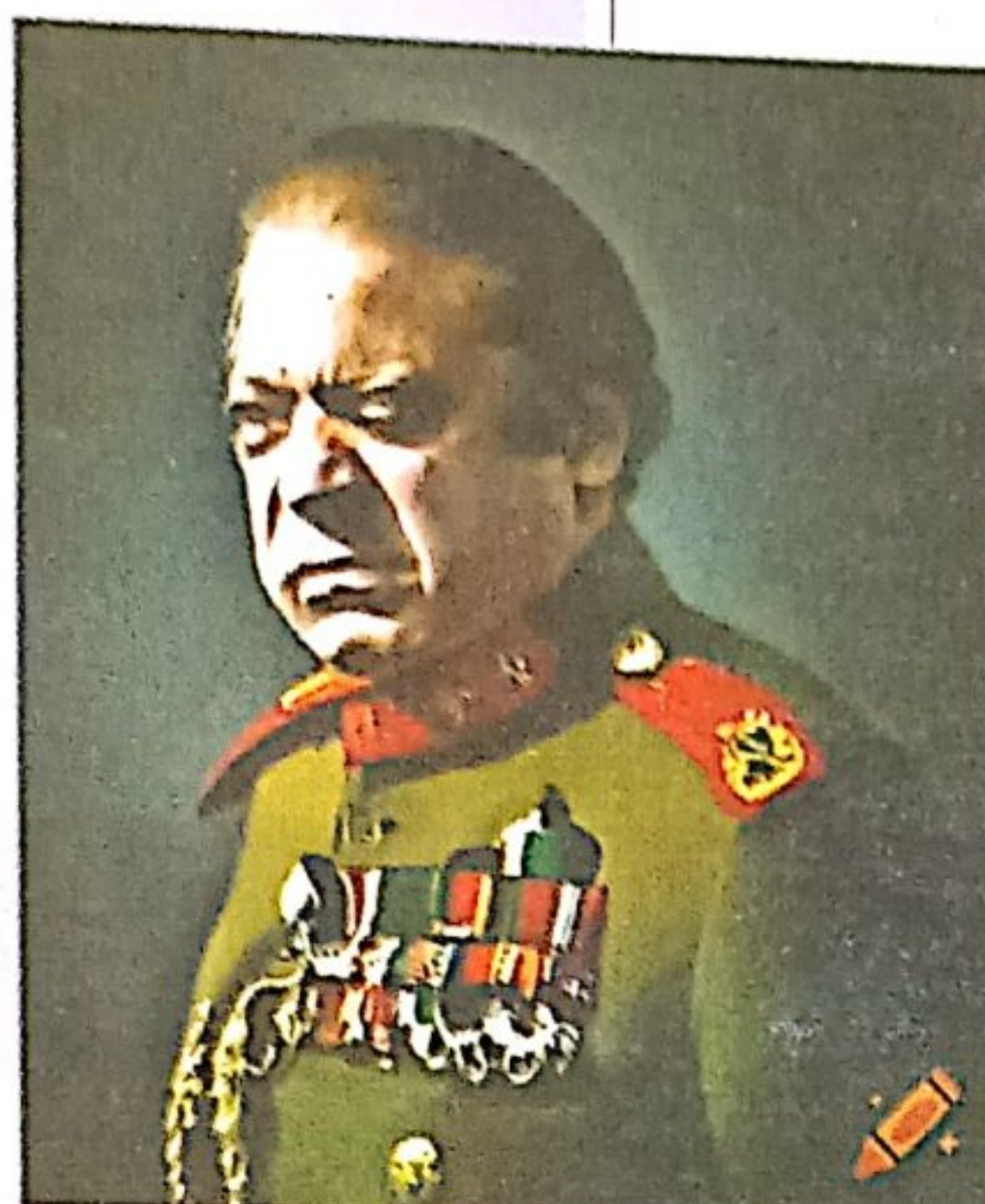
Scientists believe AI can be creative in two ways: by mimicking human creativity or by generating novel and valuable outcomes that humans cannot.

Our current technologies and techniques are helping AI do both as we progress with computer vision, machine learning, neural networks, natural language processing, generative adversarial networks, evolutionary algorithms and swarm intelligence that help AI learn from human data and produce similar or improved outputs.

If we gauge AI creativity through the lens of Alan Turing's "Turing Machine," artificial intelligence is constantly learning, solving problems, manipulating symbols and potentially performing any computation. Sounds familiar? Our Generative Pre-Trained Transformers (GPT) and Large Language Models (LLMs) are trained to do that. They do not just use logic; they use big data and complex neural networks to go beyond human intelligence and find tangible outcomes.

Challenges to AI creativity

- AI is more creative than us in solving complex mathematical problems, making a website, picking investment decisions or writing emails. Still, it has many challenges that prevent it from replacing human creativity.
- Ethical issues such as plagiarism, responsibility, ownership and impact. Who owns the intellectual property rights of the creative products and who is accountable for the consequences? Think about the creative NFT art that holds no value now and is easy to copy.
- AI can also not quantify creativity in the form of quality, novelty and appropriateness of the output. A human can always ask for a more



creative answer that they think is more appropriate.

- There is also no single answer to why AI wants to be creative. With the evolution of AI, what goals motivate it to be creative? This is a more philosophical answer that AI ethical scientists are trying hard to answer.

Can GenAI replace human creativity?

Generative AI is a powerful tool that can create unique and compelling content. However, despite its many perks and potential use cases, AI cannot replace human creativity. It can only replicate creativity by creating art from previous works. Here are six reasons why AI can't replace human creativity:

1. GenAI is only as good as the data it is trained on

Generative AI algorithms are pretty effective at creating unique art forms. However, they can only produce this content based on their training data. Unlike humans, AI can't truly understand or interpret the meaning behind data. Instead, it generates output based on the statistical patterns it learns during training. Simply put, AI can't understand the world as humans can, and therefore, it cannot generate content that reflects human thoughts or emotions.

2. AI is not capable of the same level of spontaneity and intuition as humans

The creative process involves coming up with new ideas. Although AI can generate unique content, the content is largely based on variations of pre-existing works, particularly those programmed into it during the training process.

Additionally, unlike humans, AI cannot 'think outside the box.' It will always be limited within the boundaries of its training data. To catch up with human creativity, AI would have to come up with new thoughts and ideas – something it's simply incapable of achieving.

3. AI lacks emotional intelligence

What sets humans apart from AI is their ability to understand and incorporate emotions into the creative process. The result is often compelling works of art that not only convey the intended message but also 'speak' to the audience.

Although AI comes pretty close to human creativity in terms of creating engaging content, it lacks emotional intelligence and, therefore, cannot fully comprehend the emotional impact of its creations. The result is passable content that looks like a human created it, but with one major limitation – it doesn't really engage the audience emotionally.

4. AI can't fully understand the context behind a piece of art

Human creativity is deeply rooted in understanding the context in which a particular piece of work is created. Regardless of the form, every piece of art has a contextual base that lies in historical, cultural and social significance.

While it can be programmed with some level of

knowledge about context, AI cannot fully understand, respond to or replicate the complexities of human context.

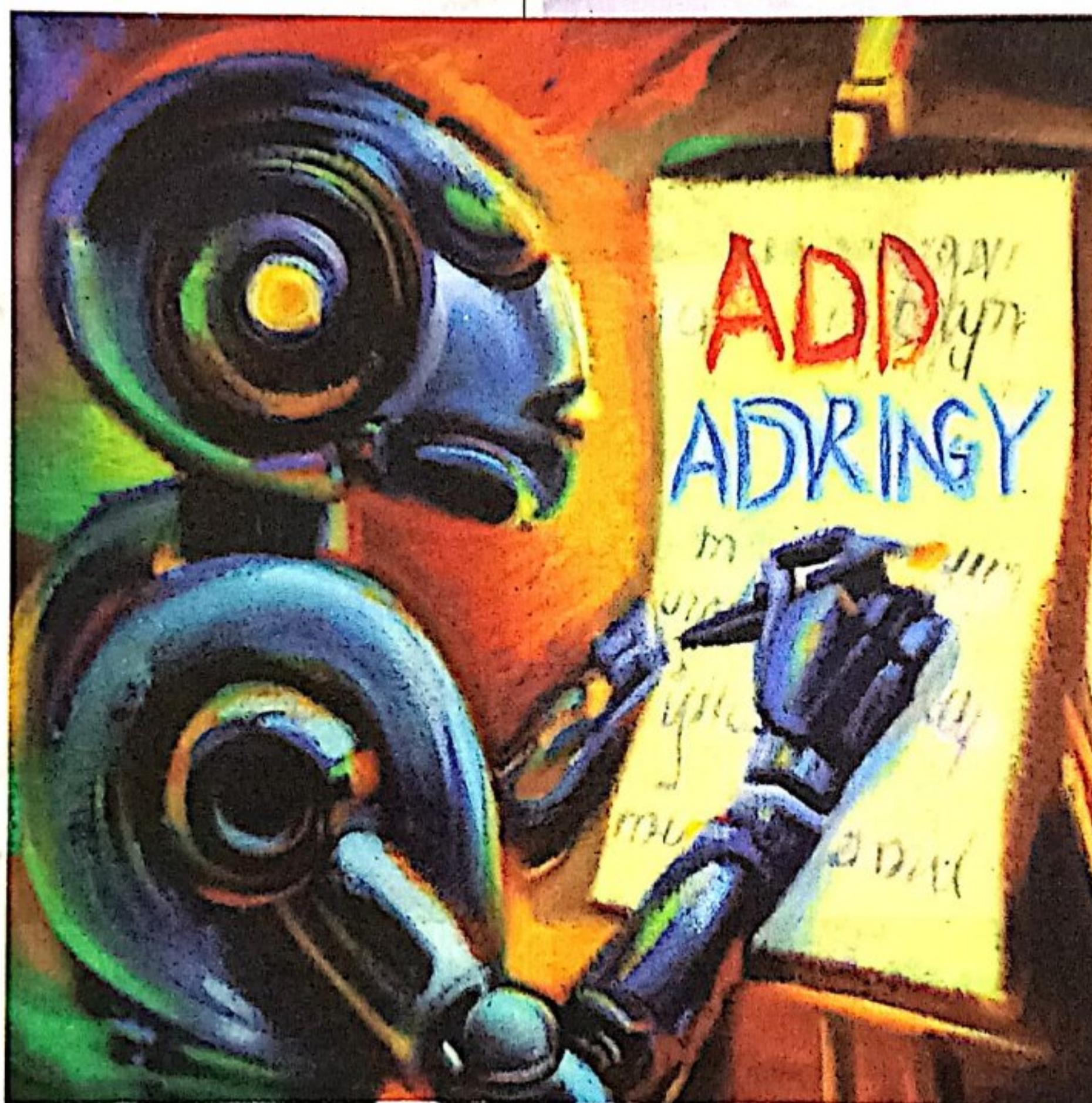
5. AI lacks the spontaneity of human intelligence

Humans can come up with new and original ideas on the fly. This crucial aspect of human creativity enables us to think outside the box and generate unexpected and innovative solutions to problems.

Unfortunately, AI is confined to the limits of its training data. As such, generative AI applications create content based on patterns and relationships found in their training data. In essence, AI models can identify patterns and make predictions, but they cannot generate new ideas outside the scope of the data they have been trained on.

6. AI lacks the human touch

Humans have an emotional and personal connection with their work – something that AI simply can't replicate. This human touch gives every piece of art created by a human a soul of sorts that is unique to the creator.



Take paintings and music, for example; the reason they're so engaging and relatable is that the artist puts part of their personal experiences, emotions and the inner world into their work.

Additionally, human creativity isn't limited by finality. Any piece of art created by a human is part of their journey to growth through experimentation, failure, learning and ultimately, growth. Conversely, AI doesn't have the ability to learn, grow or fail, which means that it may continue to create bland content that can't match human creativity.

Conclusion

In realistic terms, there is no definite answer to whether AI can replace human creativity or not. Although GenAI algorithms are making strides in the creative field, they still have a long way to go before they can fully replicate the complexity and diversity of human thought. Without the ability to understand context, emotions, personal experiences and spontaneity, AI will always struggle to replicate human creativity. Therefore, despite the looming fears that AI may soon replace human workers in the creative field, it still has a long way to go. However, AI and creativity can coexist and complement each other. The future of AI and creativity is likely to be one where AI provides new insights and inspiration to human creatives, allowing them to push the boundaries of what is possible even further. By embracing this partnership between humans and AI, we can unlock a whole new world of creativity and innovation. As a collaborator and partner, AI can assist us in generating new ideas, but it still depends on human creativity to go the extra mile to complete tasks. ■

The writer is an academic.

as the feeling of restlessness, dissatisfaction, anxiety, burn-out, loneliness and worthlessness caused due to excessive use of digital media.

Causes

There are various ways in which people fall into the trap of digital addiction and thus, feel extremely negative and develop digital depression.

1. Excessive use

The root cause of digital depression is the amount of time a person spends using mobile phones or laptops, watching OTT series, etc. The time spent watching irrelevant content or reading depressing news on the internet can also negatively influence the hormones in the brain, thus leading to digital depression.

2. Believing in meretriciousness

We experience dissatisfaction with our looks, skills and status or life in general because we check the pictures and posts of people enjoying their life and flaunting all the luxuries they have; we envy them without realising that everyone has their own share of hidden struggles and troubles in their real life which we cannot fathom through their reel life.

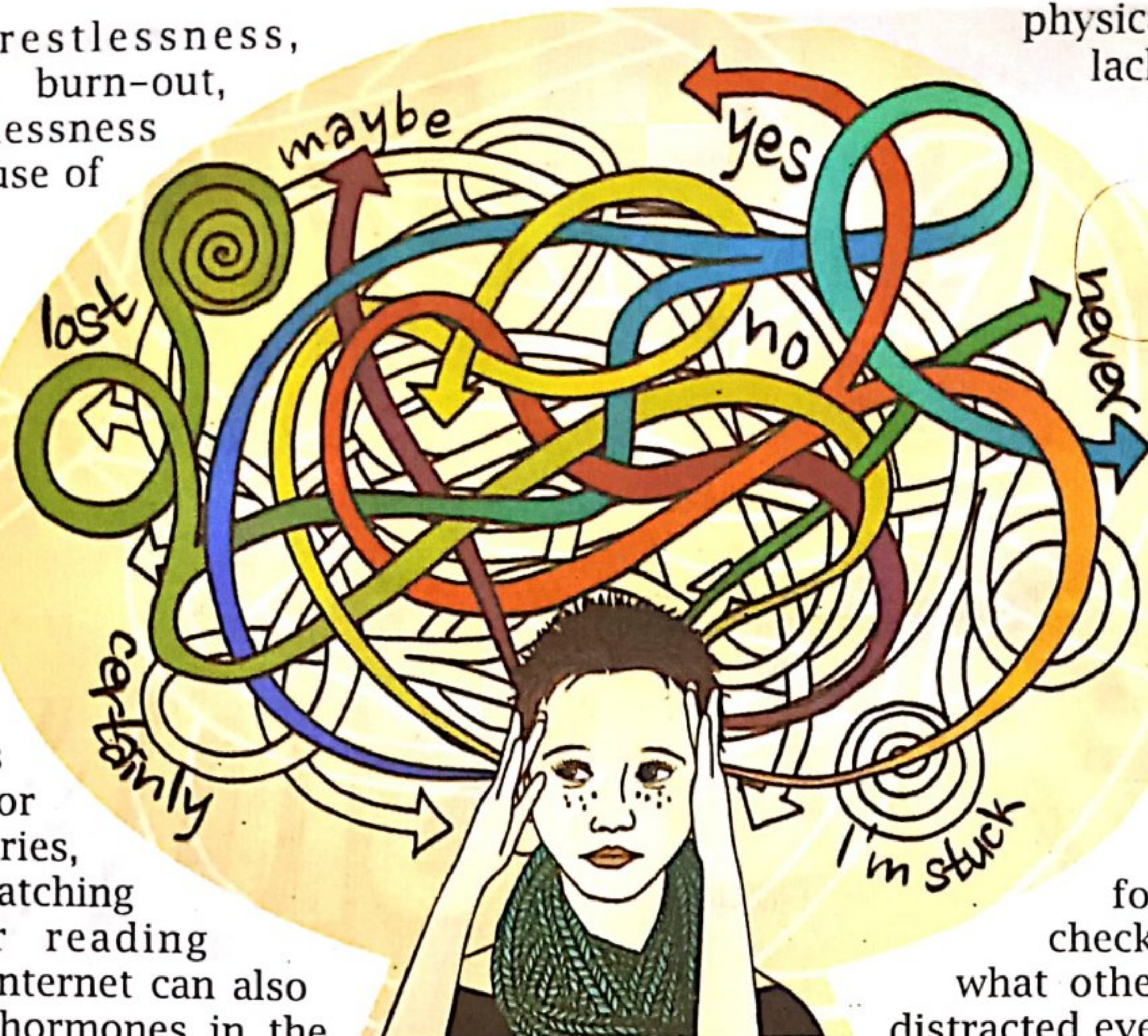
- For example, there are many couples who post their happy-moment clicks but they are not immune to the conflicts and misunderstandings; there are many teenagers who upload their family get-together videos; but deep down, they experience the issue of generational gap.

Moreover, digital media is fuelling body image dissatisfaction; many youngsters get uncomfortable sharing their original pictures; they are deeply fascinated by the world of filters and keep uploading the filtered pictures and videos. There are youngsters who get panicky if somebody captures their pictures with an original camera, and this world of filters is leading to both depression and narcissism (excessive self-love). One good click and comment is enough to thrill them with ecstasy and one negative comment is enough to ruin their day.

3. Following the trends blindly

Students and youngsters nowadays are in the fad of following the trends that appear on social media feeds. So, if there is something trending, a person tries to read about the same and even tries to implement it in his own life.

- This amount of time that gets lost in doing unwanted things on the internet makes them sleep less, focus less on their academics or job or career, makes them lose memory, and also affects their



physical and mental health due to a lack of productive activities in their lives.

4. Cyber bullying

Many get depressed because they face cyberbullying or body shaming or people harass and demean them. As goes with roasting; many roasters, in the race to get more likes and views, drag others to such an extent that it affects their psychological health.

5. Waste of time

When the exams are up and the student doesn't find time for studies because he wants to check social media feeds and know what others are doing, he will remain distracted even while studying. Thus, when other students get good marks and the student who spent the entire time of the year on the internet and technology alone doing unwanted things, fails poorly, he becomes depressed in his life.

6. Living for others

Our self-image and acceptance have, unfortunately, become contingent on others' approval and comments. There are many youngsters who experience anxiety and depression when they don't get something novel to share;

their minds remain engaged with the thoughts of which story to upload and this is affecting their psycho-social life and productivity. We don't enjoy the moment, be it a family get-together, a picnic with friends or a wedding; but just keep capturing, storing and sharing the pictures and videos. This has added to our mental burden.

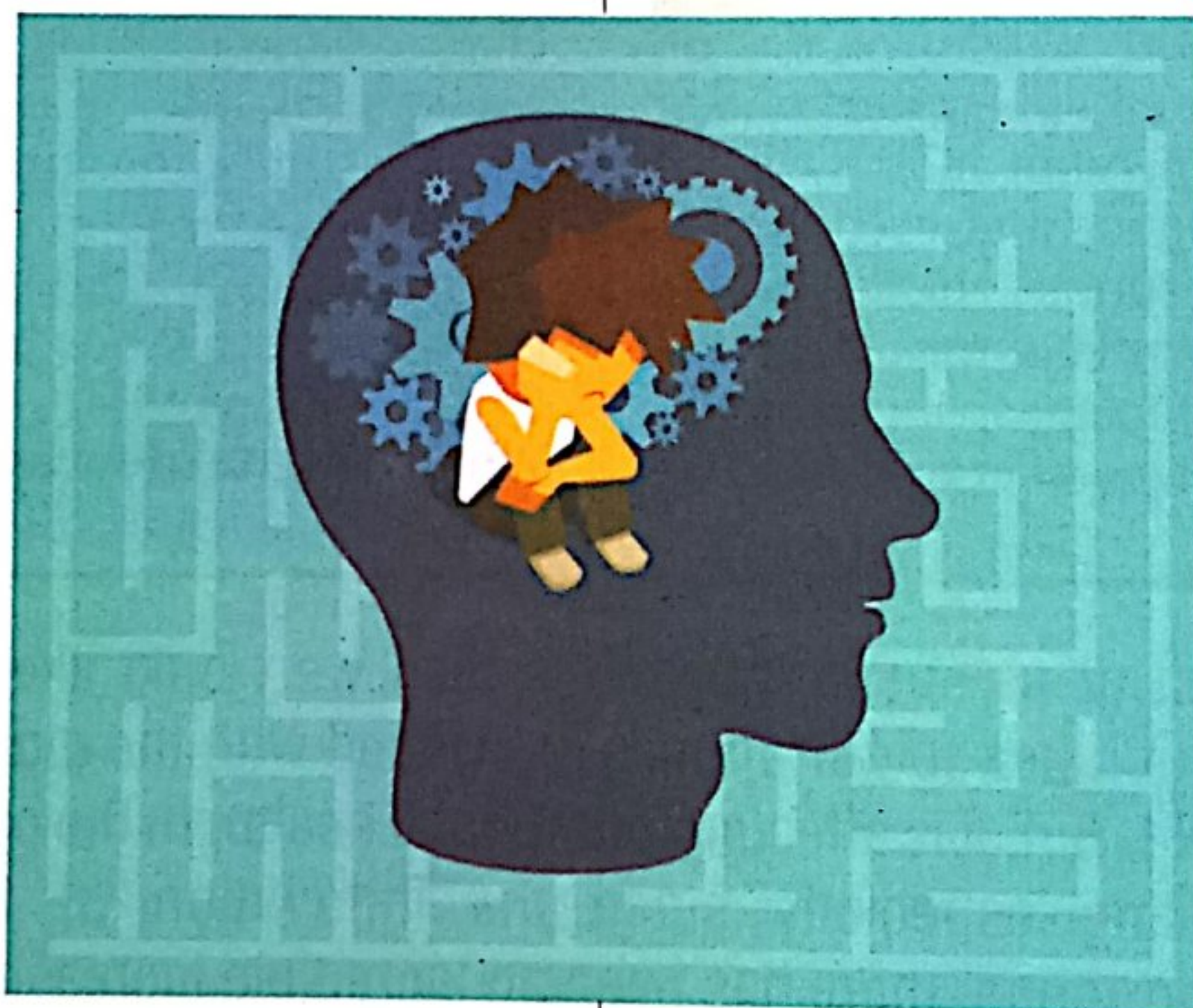
7. Cyber scams

Social media has become the hotspot of cyber scams; be they monetary scams or love scams; and we have full awareness but are still unable to prevent ourselves from this. For example, every

mature male and female have this understanding that trusting and engaging in an online relationship with a stranger after a few chitchats is naivety and a risky adventure, but still educated and sensible boys and girls are falling into this trap. Again and again, we read or hear a new story of a male or female ruined by the sweet poison of online dating. Though there are stories of happy couples who met online, online betrayals outweigh online commitments. There are many reported cases where girls changed their religion to marry their online lover and then deserted. They were shown castles in the air and then deserted after being physically, emotionally and psychologically abused. This takes a heavy toll on people's mental health.

8. Google-impressed self-medication

Another important cause of digital depression is IDIOT

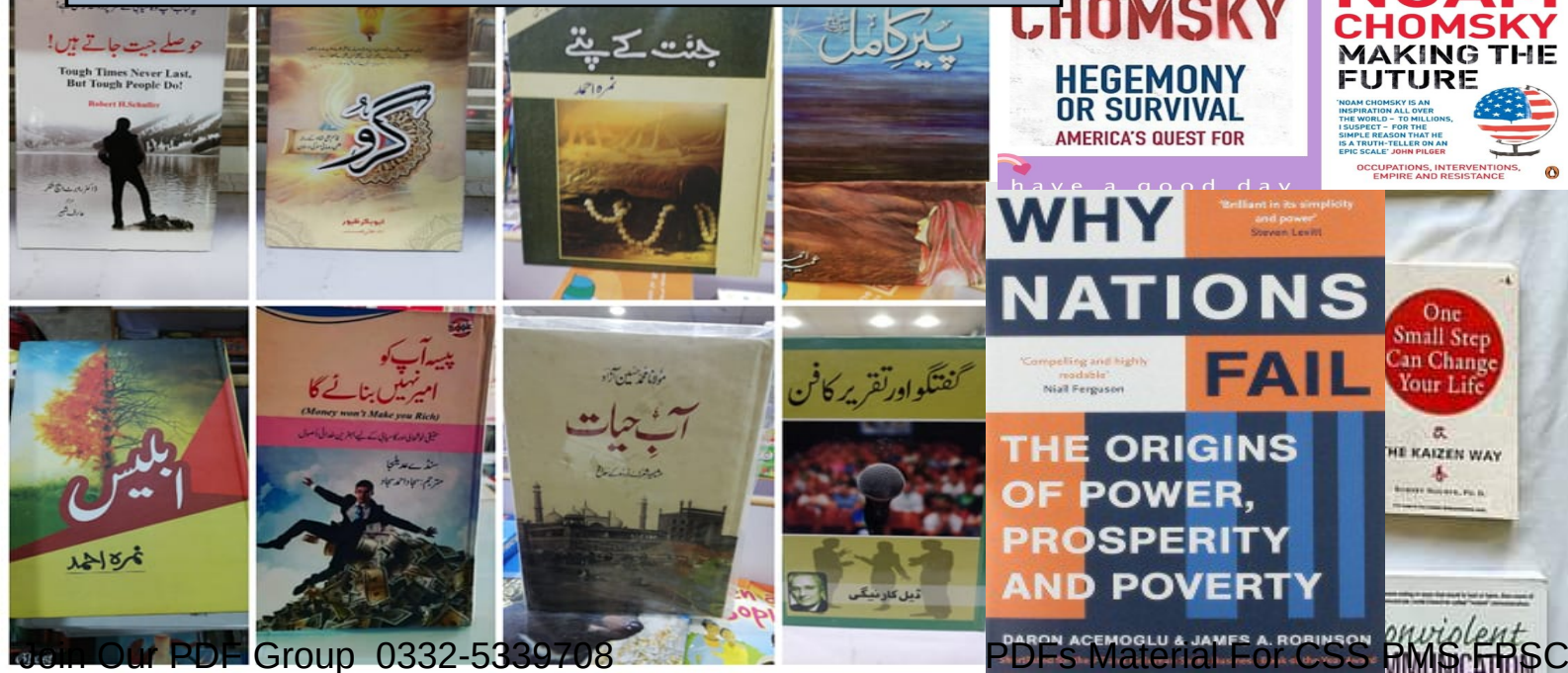


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(internet-derived information obstructing treatment) syndrome. People suffering from IDIOT syndrome google out their symptoms, self-diagnose and start treatment without consulting a doctor or some people google out the medicines prescribed by doctors and start checking their uses and side effects and then discontinue the treatment without realising that a single medicine has numerous uses and doctors know best what a patient needs. Many patients develop extreme health anxiety after searching their symptoms on the internet as on Google even a minor itching is shown to be linked to skin cancer. People blindly trust medical information available on the internet; they lack knowledge to distinguish scientific facts from myths.

Other causes

There are many digital citizens who experience worthlessness and anxiety just because their friends list and subscribers are not on par with their competitors.

Game addictions and mobile phone chatting or talking for more than the required hours can also lead to loss of time and activities in a person's life.

Symptoms

Most people experience some form of social anxiety at some point in their lives. For some, it is a mild and passing feeling, while for others, it can be more intense and persistent. Symptoms may include:

- intrusive thoughts about being watched or judged by others
- avoiding situations where you might be the focus of attention
- fear of humiliation or embarrassment
- physical symptoms such as sweating, racing heart or dizziness

Cures

A person suffering from digital depression needs to learn to balance both technology and the real world so that he is

not ruled by technology but controls his life in his own way. He should cut the amount of time spent on social media by at least half.

Keep only those online friends with whom you can meet at offline places as well, so that there are human interactions whereby feelings and emotions are expressed in a human manner. Keeping phones out of the bedroom is a great first step to cutting back on social media use, as it will increase your sleep time, which will, in turn, boost your physical and mental health.



Popular social media apps like Snapchat and Instagram are most associated with anxiety, especially among teens. Cut back on these apps or delete them altogether.

When you can, connect with friends, family members and coworkers in person. Meet for coffee or take a walk. And when you do get together, turn your phone off and put it away.

Set aside certain times of the day to answer your texts and emails. Remember that not all communication is urgent. Most of it can wait.

Go through your phone and computer and delete the

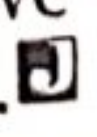
stuff you don't want and don't need. You'll cut down on messages and distractions. It will return time to your day—and add some peace to your life.

While some media consumption is fine, we can take steps to limit our exposure to troubling news. Be selective about media and stick to trusted sources. Remove anxiety-provoking information from your social media feeds. If people you follow are filling your feeds with upsetting information, mute or hide their posts.

In fine, humanity and technology should go hand in hand and that's how digital depression or digital anxiety can be avoided in the long run.

Conclusion

Digital depression is real and it is the product of digital akrasia (lack of self-control or intemperance) which is a tendency to be driven by digital dependency despite our

better intentions. In other words, we have the realisation of the ramifications of our addiction but lack self-control to come out of it. It is imperative that we work on boosting self-control. People should be sensitized about the responsibility and accountability of what they watch and share online; they should be made skilled enough to use their critical thinking ability before trusting or propounding any information and update. They should be helped to accept and respect themselves and others in real way; free from filters. As goes the principle GIGO (Gold in gold out; garbage in garbage out); we need to be cautious whether we are taking in logical and healthy infotainment or just filth and futile stuff. Time is one of the biggest blessings and we will be held accountable of how we spent it. 

The writer is a psychologist.



Digital technologies have been seeping into many facets of our lives. In the healthcare sector, digital health is developed to harness the potential of digital technologies to support access to quality healthcare. Digital technologies are now integral to daily life, and the world's population has never been more interconnected. Innovation, particularly in the digital sphere, is happening at an unprecedented scale. Even so, its application to improve the health of populations remains largely untapped, and there is immense scope for the use of digital health solutions. The World Health Organization (WHO) is harnessing the power of digital technologies and health innovation to accelerate global attainment of health and well-being. In this context, the WHO, on February 20, launched, virtually, the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH), a platform for sharing knowledge and digital products among countries. It aims to support digital health transformation in all countries by addressing their needs, coordinating resources and offering quality-assured products. While launching the initiative, the WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said that the initiative will support countries in three ways - by listening to their needs, by aligning resources to avoid fragmentation and overlap, and by providing quality-assured products. He added: "There is fragmentation and overlap because new tools are built without following common standards or shared vision. Health workers should not have to carry different devices for different diseases or have to maintain both electronic and physical records. We need systems that can speak to each other. Right now, wheels are being re-invented because of poor knowledge sharing, sometimes within countries."

What is GIDH?

It is a WHO-managed network of stakeholders organized to facilitate the implementation of the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025 and other WHO norms and standards for Digital Health System Transformation. The Initiative will serve as a platform to enable a wide global ecosystem to work collectively to promote country capacity and strengthen international cooperation in digital health.

It was proposed to consolidate and amplify recent and past gains in global digital health while strengthening mutual accountability to enhance the impact of future investments.



GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON DIGITAL HEALTH

It will promote equitable access to digital health by addressing challenges such as duplication of efforts and "products-focused" digital health transformation through a focus on four foundational pillars:

- 1. Country Needs Tracker** - ensuring digital health investments are informed by country priorities;
- 2. Country Resource Portal** - identifying traditional as well as innovative resource opportunities, enhancing transparency and reducing the risk of duplication while enabling a standards-based prospective and retrospective analysis of resourcing gaps in digital health.
- 3. Transformation Toolbox** - quality-assured tools and resources that strengthen country capacity and autonomy to manage their national digital health transformation journey;
- 4. Convening and Knowledge Exchange** - promoting strengthened collaboration and knowledge

exchange across global, regional and national networks in digital health.

Why this initiative?

Digital health is a proven accelerator to advance health outcomes and achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the almost two decades since the first Member State driven resolution on eHealth, which culminated in the 2020 comprehensive resolution on digital health, over 120 WHO Member States have developed a national digital health policy or strategy, although many of these are not costed or proposed robust architectural plans. The acceleration of digital health transformation is also challenged by fragmentation in resource allocation and alignment to country needs, along with variable definitions and levels of quality of digital solutions. Countries are seeking support to move from product-focused digital health initiatives to establishing national digital health infrastructure with the appropriate national competency to maintain and adapt - a recognized need for trusted and quality-assured technical support to address national digital health priorities, with government in the driver's seat.

A lack of visibility and alignment of investments in digital health has, for many years, frustrated efforts by countries, development partners and technical partners to reduce duplication and optimize impact. For example, a recent report from 2022,



highlighted how publicly available information is missing on current funding levels and gaps in domestic and external investment in digital health, particularly for low and lower-middle income countries.

The rapid deployment and scale-up of digital technologies propelled by the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated countries' appetite for digital health transformation. A global platform, which can respond to the complex digital health ecosystem by aligning investments, strengthening the enabling environment and enhancing quality assured technical support while promoting countries' autonomy in their digital health transformation journeys, is, therefore, needed.

Aims and Objectives

The key components of the GIDH will leverage existing evidence, tools and

learnings and will be co-created through a transparent and inclusive process. Through this evidence-based and comprehensive co-creation process, GIDH will ultimately aim to:

- **ALIGN** efforts to support the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025;
- **SUPPORT** quality-assured technical assistance to develop and strengthen standards-based and interoperable systems aligned to global best practices, norms and standards;
- **FACILITATE** the deliberate use of quality-assured digital transformation tools that enable governments to manage their digital health transformation journey.

Core Areas

The GIDH will focus on several core areas:

- Assess and prioritize country needs for sustainable digital health transformation.
- Increase the alignment of country-level digital health resources and unfunded priorities.
- Support the accelerated achievement of the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025 strategic objectives.
- Build capacity and efforts to encourage digital health technology development, maintenance and adaptation according to ever-changing local needs.

Benefits

Improved Access: Digital tools can reach remote areas, connect patients to specialists and enable virtual consultations, expanding healthcare access.

Enhanced Affordability: Telemedicine, electronic prescribing, and data-driven resource allocation can potentially reduce healthcare

costs.

Personalized Care: Electronic health records (EHRs) and wearable devices facilitate personalized treatment plans and preventive care.

Empowered Patients: Digital platforms can educate patients, enhance medication adherence and promote self-management of chronic conditions.

Streamlined Healthcare Delivery: Digitization empowers efficient data management, administrative processes and resource optimization within healthcare systems.

Challenges

While digital technologies have abundant potential to support universal healthcare coverage, the implementation is not without challenges.

Disparities: Countries have different maturity levels in digital, information and technology infrastructures. Lack of resources, funding and supporting policies regarding digital protection also make countries' digital health transformation less effective.

Infrastructure Gaps: Unequal access to internet connectivity, electricity and digital devices hinders widespread adoption.

Data Privacy and Security: Concerns and regulations regarding patient data privacy and security require robust solutions.

Digital Literacy: Bridging the digital divide through training and awareness programs is crucial for patient and provider involvement.

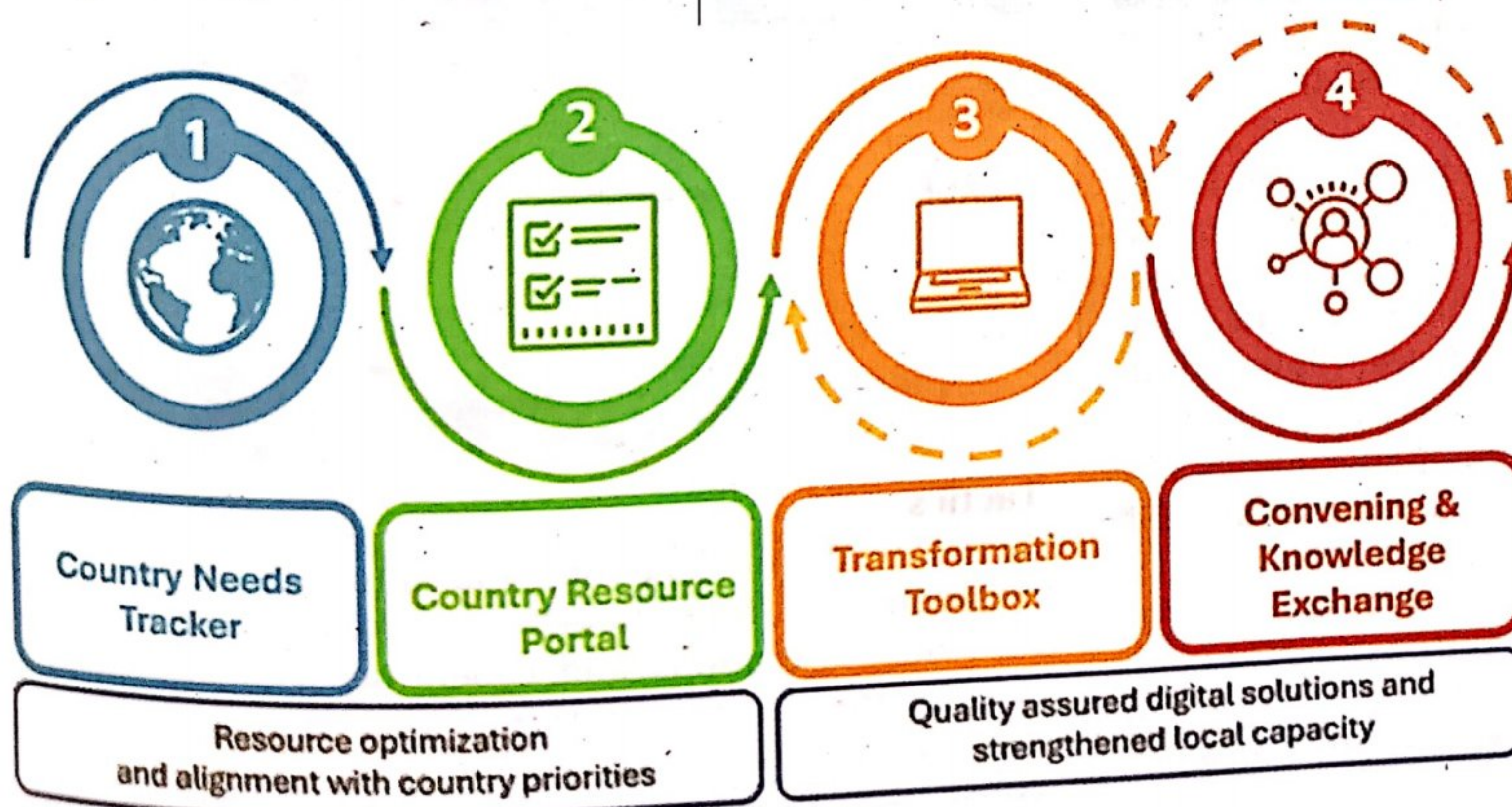
Interoperability and Standards: Seamless integration and exchange of data across different healthcare IT systems is needed.

Skilled Workforce: Building a workforce equipped to handle digital health technologies and data analysis is vital.

Conclusion

Digital health is a proven accelerator to advance health outcomes and achieve universal health coverage and health-related SDGs. Hence, it needs to be made integral to every health policy. Nearly half the world's population might not have access to health services they need, but 90% have access to a 3G connection, showing the potential for digital health. By scaling up existing initiatives, collaborating across stakeholders and fostering innovation, we can leverage digital health to achieve the goal of universal healthcare and ensure better health outcomes for all.

The writer is a student at UMT, Lahore.



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EXAM PAPER

GREY ZONE WARFARE



Nadia Nadir Naqvi

Recently, the Taiwan defence ministry sent a report to the national parliament in which it said that China has stepped up 'grey-zone warfare' against Taiwan, aiming to make the areas around the democratic island "saturated" with balloons, drones and civilian boats. The Taiwan government has complained in recent years that China has been using this type of warfare, which wields irregular tactics to exhaust a foe without resorting to open combat. China has attempted to "increase the burdens of our naval and air forces and to obscure the existence of the median line in the strait," the report said, referring to an unofficial border between the two sides, which China's forces have begun regularly crossing in recent years. In a conflict, China will try to speedily seize Taiwan and prevent external intervention, the ministry added. To complicate that, the island is working to diversify its command systems and incorporate more mobile and long-range weapons, as well as artificial intelligence, while boosting "connections" with democratic allies, including the United States.

What is Grey-zone Warfare?

Although the definition of "grey zone" is imperfect and not fully agreed upon, yet it is generally defined as the use of coercive measures to exploit the operational space between peace and war that deliberately stay below a threshold so as not to prompt a conventional military response to alter the status quo which otherwise would have been attracted.

It consists of a set of activities that occur between peace (or cooperation) and war (or armed conflict).

A Cold War legacy

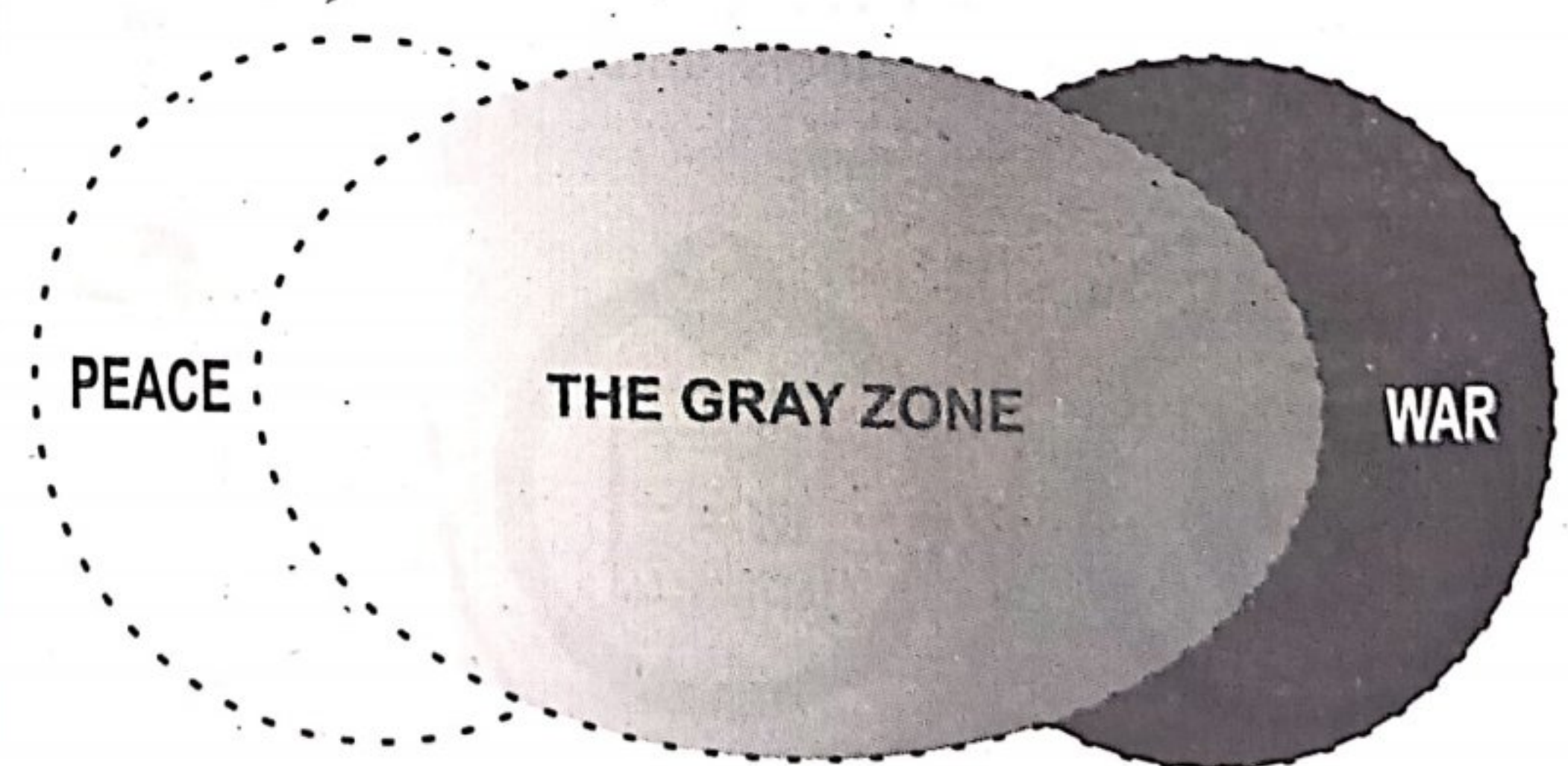
One can argue that activities in the grey zone have always been a feature of great-power competition. Proxy wars, destabilizing insurgencies, legal warfare (lawfare) and information warfare — by adversaries and allies alike — have been a feature of conflict for millennia. But the cost of conventional conflict in the nuclear era has grown too steep, and the risk of escalation too profound. As a result, nations seek to promote their national objectives through aggression conducted covertly, or with obfuscated attribution or

justification, in order to achieve their goals.

The Cold War era, which began after the end of the Second World War in 1945, led to conditions that favoured grey-zone warfare. Amid the US-USSR rivalry for ideological and economic dominance, the knowledge that both parties were armed with nuclear weapons meant direct conflicts had to be restrained. Hence, the conditions of the Cold War era spurred the adoption of grey zone tactics to avoid catastrophic escalation.

While the Soviet Union, its Warsaw Pact allies, and even the United States and its partners operated in what we now call the "grey zone" during the Cold War, the available mediums and vulnerabilities have only increased with the globalization of trade and capital markets, as well as the proliferation of the internet and social media. The strength of open and transparent societies also tends to provide multiple avenues and opportunities for competitors to operate in the grey zone.

Both China and Russia have actually accused the United States of engaging in grey-zone activities, e.g. engaging surrogates such as contractors in a conflict or instigating the "colour" revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.



Tactics

A multitude of activities fall into this murky in-between — from nefarious economic activities, influence operations and cyberattacks to mercenary operations, assassinations and disinformation campaigns. Generally, grey-zone activities are considered gradualist campaigns by state and non-

EXAM PACK

state actors that combine non-military and quasi-military tools and fall below the threshold of armed conflict. They aim to thwart, destabilize, weaken or attack an adversary, and they are often tailored toward the vulnerabilities of the target state. While grey-zone activities are nothing new, the onset of new technologies has provided states with more tools to operate and avoid clear categorization, attribution and detection.

Characteristics

Below the threshold of armed conflict:

The grey-zone activities remain below the threshold of igniting a full-fledged military offensive as a justified response, often through the use of non-military tools.

Example: The Russian attack on Crimea and China's action in the South China Sea are examples of grey-zone warfare

Progressive unfolding of aggressive moves:

The strategy followed here is aggressive-passive resistance being dragged over decades to keep the dispute alive on the one hand while also providing a false narrative of engaging in talks to resolve the dispute, thus deterring a decisive response.

Example: China's use of the Salami Slicing tactics to change

Targeting specific vulnerabilities: The grey-zone campaigns target specific vulnerabilities in the targeted countries with targeted campaigns aimed at creating chaos.

Example: Funding terrorism and insurgency in other countries by arming splinter groups.

Strategic ambiguity: Strong responses appear to be counterproductive as the aggressive country takes advantage of the strategic ambiguity in relations, whereby there are competing strategic, economic and domestic political reasons not to engage in full-fledged conflict.

Example: India's ban on Chinese applications in the wake of the Doklam standoff is not considered a strong response by India.

Why is grey-zone warfare seen as a separate category of action?

Firstly, the challenges that grey-zone warfare poses differ from those of an open conflict. Here, action is often covert or indirect, meaning a country's response needs to be appropriate in terms of its scale.

Actions could be designed to bait the other party into escalation, which would thus free the forces of the country launching such warfare to respond in kind – and the use of force would then be legitimised as a form of self-defence or response in kind to what the other party does.

Other reasons for engaging in such tactics include the projection of strength, and to normalise disputed territorial claims by repeatedly marking a presence in those regions. Judging by its appearance, grey-zone conflict seems mild when compared to traditional strategic competition. However, the limited intensity does not make grey-zone conflict less vicious. Rather than escalate in one dimension, it tends to escalate in multiple dimensions and leads to unintended over-escalation, creating a nightmare for crisis management.

Examples

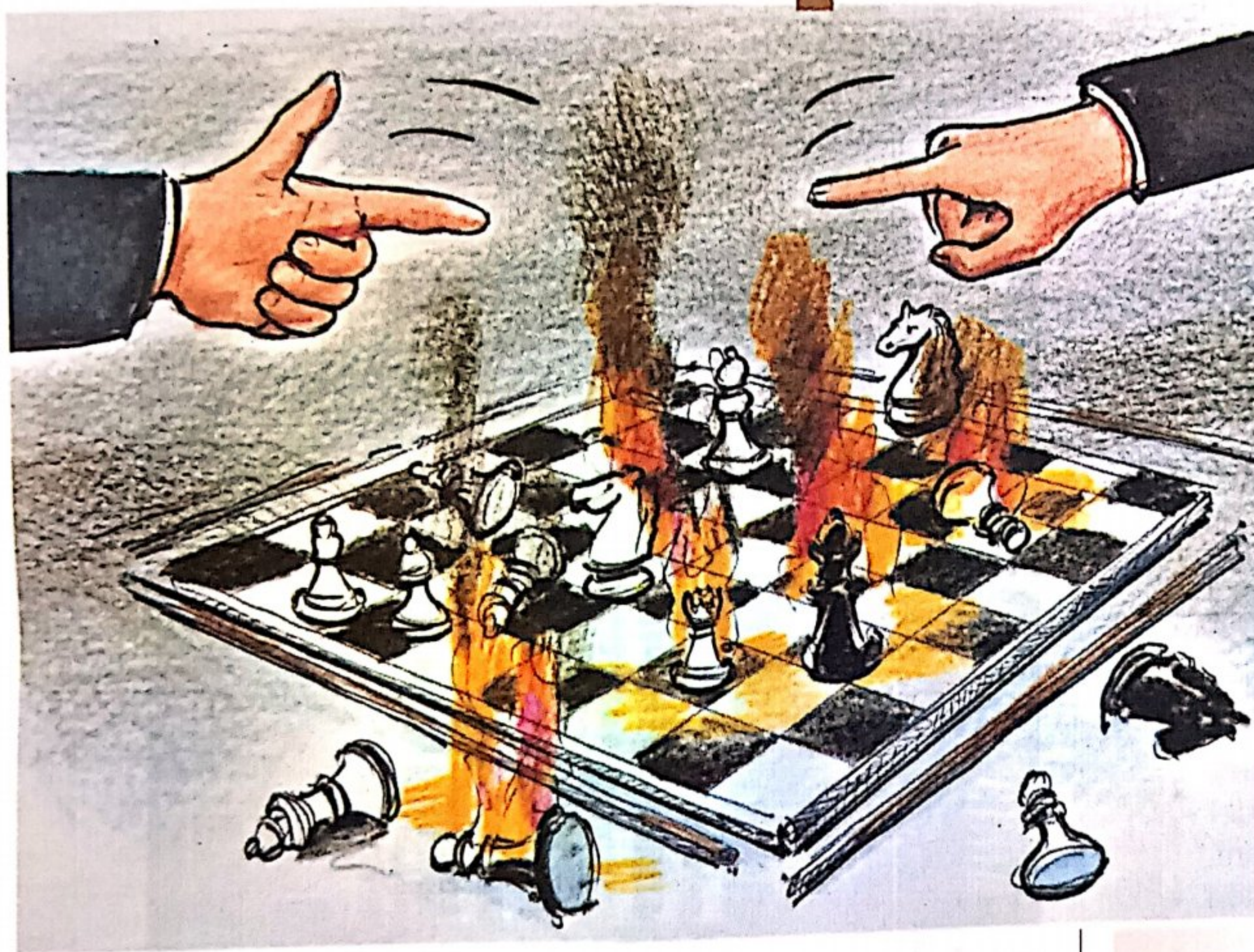
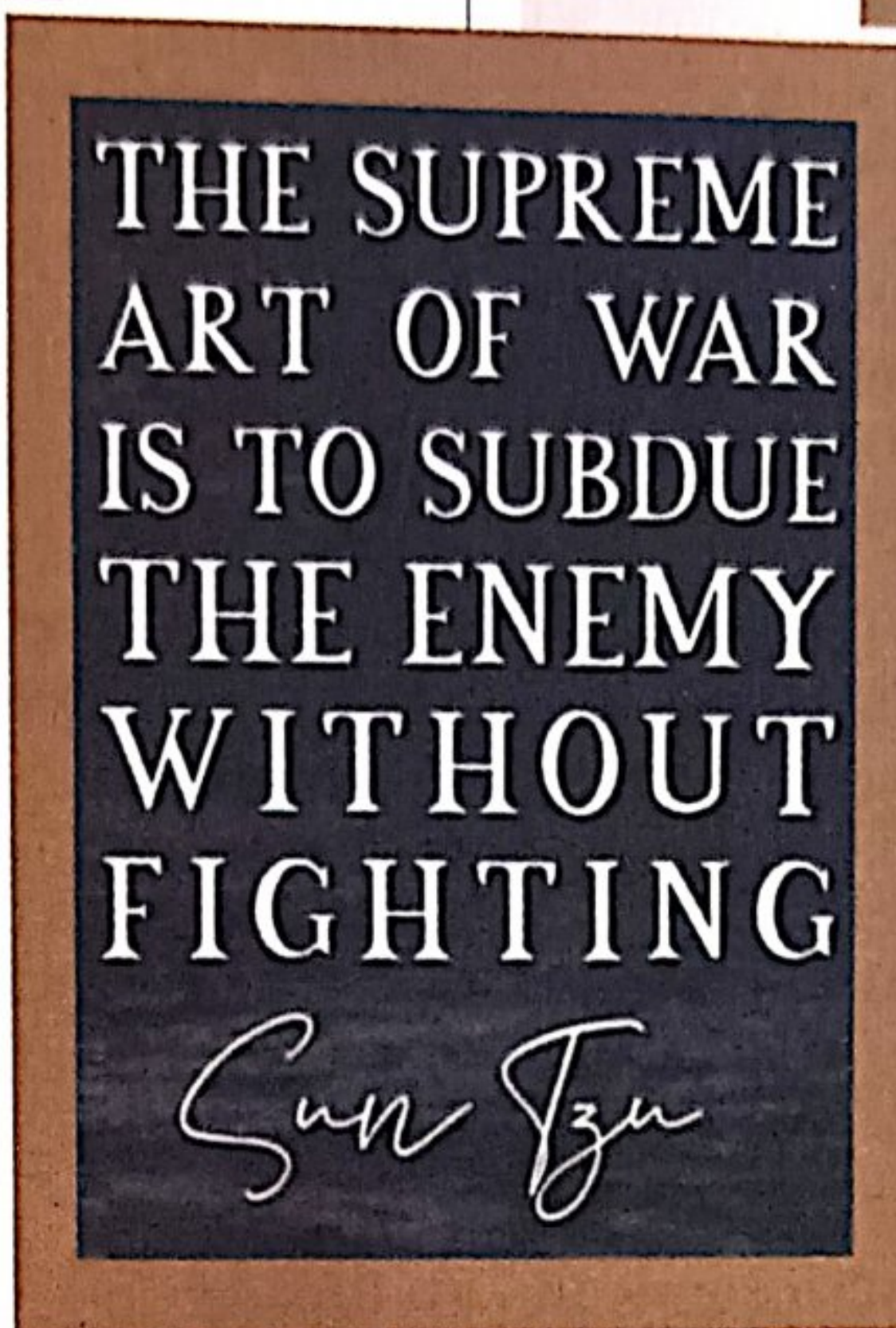
South China Sea disputes: China's assertive actions in the South China Sea, including maritime militia presence and territorial claims,

exemplify grey-zone warfare. Confrontations with countries like the Philippines underscore the contentious nature of these tactics.

Taiwan Strait tensions: Chinese military manoeuvres near Taiwan and Taiwan's complaints of increased Chinese military activity highlight the use of grey-zone strategies to pressure without provoking outright conflict.

US-China economic rivalry: Economic sanctions, trade tariffs and maritime reconnaissance efforts by the United States against China illustrate grey-zone competition beyond military realms. ■

The writer is a CSS aspirant.



territorial status quo with its neighbours.

Risk of escalation: Grey-zone aggression uses the risk of escalation as a source of coercive leverage and deters a decisive response.

Example: Indian incursion of the Line of Actual Control with China.

Lack of attributability: The aggressor country can simply deny its involvement and deflect response in a grey-zone campaign which obstruct the potential for successful deterrence.

Example: Cyberattacks or disinformation campaigns or the use of proxy forces, election meddling (Russia's in US elections)

EXAM PACK

Muhammad Asim Jasra



This is a comprehensive 'what-to-do and how-to-do-it' book that reveals the secret to a happy, successful and rich life. Many famous successful people, such as Henry Ford, Graham Bell and Woodrow Wilson, used this secret and lived fulfilling and inspiring lives. This secret is

picked by those who have an extreme urge for it or are searching for it already.

This book defines richness as inclusive, saying that great riches not only include money but also relations, understanding, mental peace, the ability to enjoy happiness and harmony. When riches begin to come, they come so quickly, in such great abundance that one wonders where they have been hiding during all those lean years.

Introduction to the author

Napoleon Hill (1883–1970) – is an American self-help writer who is best known for his magnum opus *Think and Grow Rich*, which was published in 1937.

Other books authored by him are as under:

- The Law of Success (1928)
- The Magic Ladder to Success (1930)
- The Master-Key to Riches (1945)
- Grow Rich! With Peace of Mind (1967)
- You Can Work Your Own Miracles (1971)

Some reflections

1. Desire

All achievements and earned riches have their origins in an idea. If you are ready for the secret, you already possess half of it. There must be a burning desire to have and apply that secret. Desires, if stronger than the hurdles in the way, lead to destinations. Strong desires survive disappointment, discouragement, temporary defeat,

criticism and the constant reminding of a waste of time. Opportunity comes in the disguise of misfortune or temporary defeat. Perhaps, for this reason, so many people fail to recognize it. An intangible impulse of thought can be transmuted into material rewards by the application of known principles. First of all, one must know what one wants. Then, one should stand by the desire until it is realized.

The most common cause of failure is the habit of quitting. Success may be a few inches away. Never quit. Success is just 'one more attempt' away. A sense of failure is a trickster; it comes when success is nearby. Success is a state of mind that attracts further success. The secret of riches will strike you if you keep on trying to achieve your goal. Our thoughts or dreams make our minds attract ways to materialize them. Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve! Desire is the starting point of all achievements. When you have a burning desire for a goal, it makes you insensitive to the pain of struggle.

Six steps to getting rich

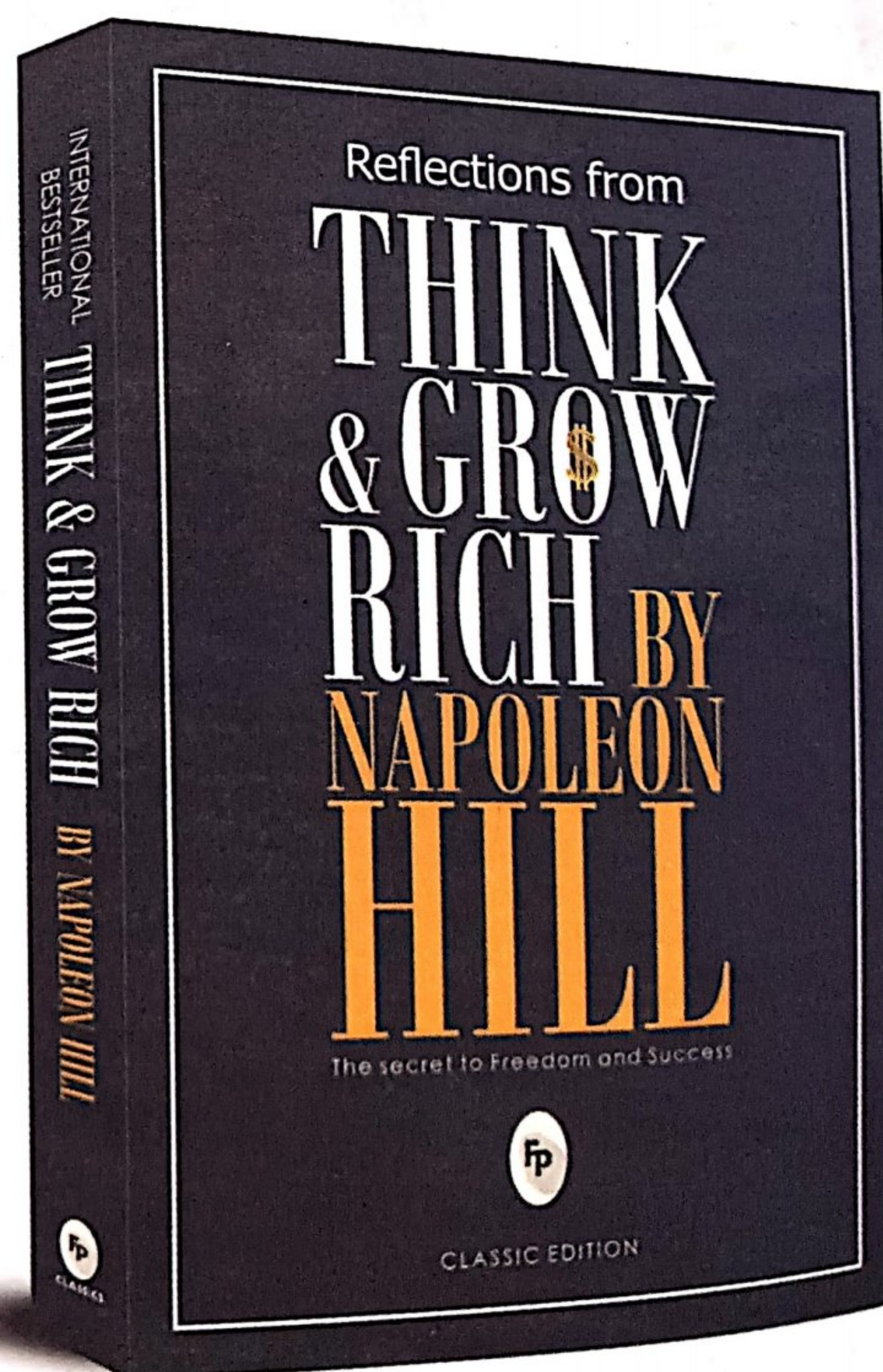
1. Fix your goal; it must be specific.
2. Determine tradeoff. What are you willing to give in return for what you want to have? It may be your time, skill or some kind of investment.
3. Fix a date when you want to have achieved your goal.
4. Create a definite plan and begin at once.



5. Have a mission statement.
6. Read this statement aloud twice daily; believe that you have already materialized your goal.

'Thoughts are real, important things that can be manifested into physical existence.' This thought-provoking quote instills in you a strong urge to dream big and work relentlessly to achieve it. Achieving your dreams requires an apt strategy to explore your potential and exploit it in your favour. And, if you have ever wondered about how to use the potential of your subconscious mind, one book that can serve as a beacon of light for you is 'Think And Grow Rich' in which the author, Napoleon Hill (a world-famous American author in the area of the new thought movement) explains what you have to do in order to earn money, become rich and get the life that you want. He outlines everything you need to do in step-by-step instructions.

Unveiled to the world in 1937, this groundbreaking work remains the gold standard for countless readers worldwide, seeking guidance on wealth, success, and personal growth. It is all about the thirteen principles that can change the course of your mindset. By applying these thirteen steps, you can begin to notice positive changes. It takes you by the hand in thirteen chapters and gives you a comprehensive work plan. Follow this plan and put it into action and you will be taking your first positive steps to finally earning as much money as you want.



Every failure brings with it the seeds of an equivalent success. Have a dream and then put it into practice. Thomas Edison invented the electric bulb after more than 10,000 failures. Marconi's friends took him to a psychopathic hospital when he announced that he had discovered a principle through which he could send messages through the air. When you have a burning desire for a certain purpose, it will enable you to attract or catch the ways to fulfil it. A burning desire is a great asset. It can transmute itself into its physical equivalent. Both poverty and riches are mental conditions. Ground realities just follow them. There are no limitations to the potential of your mind. We set these limitations arbitrarily.

2. Faith

In your quest for any goal, faith should follow your burning desire. Faith can be developed through autosuggestion. When desire is passed on to your subconscious with faith, the subconscious mind will get it materialized through the most direct and practical media available. Thoughts attract like kinds of thoughts; thus, after accumulation, the very kind of thought becomes powerful in one's mind.

Desire and faith stimulate physical actions and strategies. Ideas have power. All the man-made developments on this planet started with an idea in the mind of an individual.

Autosuggestion

The principle of autosuggestion implies that one should pick the thoughts that inspire one to achieve one's goals. Autosuggestion regulates the thoughts that reach the subconscious mind. It works when it is well-mixed with emotions and feelings. When we convince our subconscious mind with the help of autosuggestion and belief, then it offers us physical plans to achieve our goals.

Do not wait for a plan. Concentrate on your desire. Your subconscious mind will give you the plans. Plans will flash in the form of an inspiration into your mind through the sixth sense. Put them into action immediately. Do not follow reasons; follow your obsessions while creating or implementing your plans. Man is the master of his destiny because he has the power to influence his own subconscious mind.

3. Specialized Knowledge

General knowledge is of little use in the accumulation of money. Knowledge attracts money when it is organized and intelligently directed through practical plans of

action to the definite end of the accumulation of money. An educated man is the one who has so developed his mental faculties that he can acquire anything he wants without violating the rights of others. You do not need to keep all the knowledge in your mind. You should know only the source from which any specialized knowledge or the answer to your question can be obtained. Ideas work only when they are supported by relevant specialized knowledge.

Following are the sources of extraordinary knowledge:

A man who has discovered how to increase the intensity of thought to the point where he can freely communicate with sources of knowledge not available through ordinary rate of thought is called a genius. Genius status is acquired only when mind is stimulated to draw the forces available through creative imagination.

4. Imagination

Through the faculty of imagination, the finite mind of man has direct communication with infinite intelligence. The more it is used, the more it develops.

The purpose must be definite. The riches are not the product of hard work alone. Definite demands and the application of definite principles work. They do not come by chance or luck. Never depend on luck alone. Ideas are intangible but more powerful than the tangible brain that gives birth to them. They have the power to live on after the brain has returned to dust.

5. Organized planning

Plans must be practical and workable. If your first plan fails, try another one. Do not get discouraged by temporary defeat. This only means that there is something wrong with your plan. A quitter never wins, and a winner never quits. Do not take defeat seriously.

Major attributes of leadership

- Courage based upon knowledge of one's self and of one's occupation
- Self-control
- A keen sense of justice
- The habit of doing more than paid for
- A pleasing personality
- Sympathy and understanding
- Mastery of details
- Responsibility
- Cooperation
- Delegation of powers to capable subordinates
- Ability to make others perform
- Give credit to the deserving
- Leading by encouraging, not by fear
- Advertising your authority not by words, but by your conduct

Our inability to exploit our true potential in life is a breach of trust with nature that has blessed us with it. Everyone enjoys the kind of work for which they are best suited. First, decide exactly what kind of job you want. If the job does not already exist, then create it.

QQS principle of selling your services

Q = Quality of service

Q = Quantity of service

S = Spirit of service

Deficiency in service can be covered by a pleasing personality, but nothing covers the vacuum created by the lack of a pleasing conduct.

A question

Would you take your own services if you are put in the shoes of the purchaser of your services?

Major causes of failure

Subconscious mind

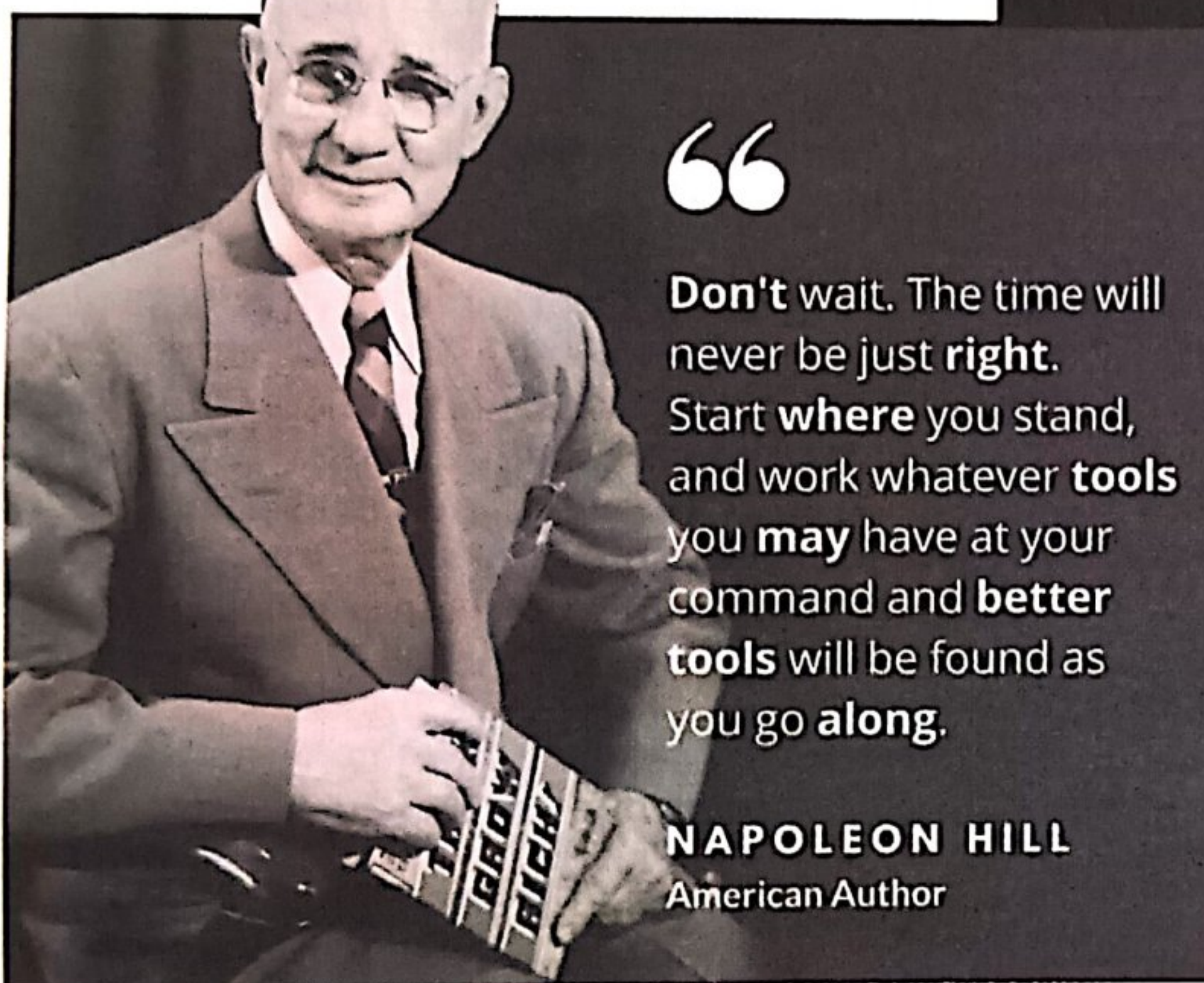
Infinite intelligence

Accumulated experience

Experiment and Research

- Lack of a well-defined purpose in life
- Lack of an ambition to aim above mediocrity
- Lack of self-discipline
- Failure to take due care of one's health
- Procrastination (Waiting for the time to be right)
- Lack of persistence
- Repulsive personality
- Lack of the power of decision-making
- Fear of failure
- Fear to take calculated risks
- Wrong selection of team
- Failure to have an open mind
- Lack of concentration of efforts
- Failure to save money
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Inability to cooperate with others
- Intentional dishonesty

You must have enough capital to absorb the shock of your mistakes. Over-cautiousness is as harmful for success as under-cautiousness.



“

Don't wait. The time will never be just **right**. Start **where** you stand, and work whatever **tools** you **may** have at your command and **better tools** will be found as you go **along**.

NAPOLEON HILL
American Author

Self-analysis is a must for improvement in your personality and personal services.

6. Decision

Never procrastinate. Don't get influenced easily by the opinions of others when you make decisions. Don't let your confidence be shattered by the opinions or ridicule of others. Keep your own counsel. Do it before you tell the world that you intend to do it. The value of decisions depends on the courage required to make them.

7. Persistence

Persistence is directly proportional to the intensity of desire. An invisible power tests your persistence by offering temporary defeat or resistance.

Foundations of persistence

- Definiteness of purpose
- Intense desire
- Belief in one's ability
- Definite plan of action
- Accurate knowledge
- Cooperation
- Will power
- Relevant habit(s)
- A mind closed against all discouraging

influences

- A friendly alliance/mastermind alliance

Beware of the following:

- Failure to define what you want
- Procrastination
- Lack of interest in acquiring specialized knowledge
- Blaming the circumstances
- Quitting on seeing the signs of defeat
- Lack of desire
- Searching for shortcuts
- Fear of criticism

Creative faculty versus reasoning faculty

The reasoning faculty is often faulty because it is guided by one's own accumulated experience which varies from person to person. Ideas received through one's creative faculty are reliable. For this reason, your reasoning faculty will not allow you to set targets higher than your already tapped potential.

When you are stuck in a problem and are desperately searching for its solution, then do the following things:

- Use one or more mind stimulants. Examples of mind stimulants are music, getting mentally relaxed and being in the company of charming people.
- Have a clear picture of known and unknown factors.
- Let the subconscious mind play its role. The subconscious mind comes into play when you take a break from your work, get mentally relaxed or sleep.

Why men seldom succeed before forty?

The most productive years of one's life are between 40 and 60. High achievers start learning the art of transmuting their sexual urges in their 30s. Transmutation is possible by just redirecting your thoughts. For this, you have to identify which thought is positive and which is negative. Voluntary self-effort is the key to transmutation. Love stimulates the human mind to tap its potential. A failed love is a greater asset than a successful love.

Media of personal magnetism

- Handshake
- Tone of voice
- Posture and carriage of the body
- The vibration of thought
- Body adornment

8. The Subconscious Mind

It works day and night. It connects finite mind with infinite intelligence. One should feed it with desires and positive emotions. Let no undesirable thought reach it. Only emotionalized thoughts influence it. It understands the language of emotions.

Examples of positive emotions

- Desire
- Faith
- Love and affection
- Enthusiasm
- Hope
- Happiness

Seven major negative emotions to be avoided

- Fear
- Jealousy
- Hatred
- Revenge

- Greed
- Superstition
- Anger

9. The Brain

We have limited our knowledge to physical/tangible things, yet *all of us are controlled by forces that are unseen and intangible*. It has been determined that there are from

10 billion to 14 billion nerve cells arranged in definite pattern in the human cerebral cortex. It is inconceivable that such an intricate network should be in existence for the sole purpose of maintaining physical body.

10. The Sixth Sense

It is a medium through which infinite intelligence may communicate voluntarily. It may warn you in times of danger. It may alert you to embrace opportunities at their own pace. Let great men shape your life. Make them your invisible counsellors.

The six basic fears

- Poverty
- Criticism
- Ill health
- Loss of love
- Old age
- Death

How to control the fear of poverty?

If you want riches, you must refuse to accept any circumstances that lead to poverty. Accepting poverty is a great weakness for any human being. Never accept it. Burn your boats and make your retreat impossible. Poverty is a state of mind; change your thoughts. Seek the company of successful, blessed and talented people. Riches are better than poverty without a shadow of a doubt, but riches must be earned through fair means. Keep in mind that poverty is a curse, but adopting unfair means to remove your poverty is a bigger curse.

Symptoms of fear of poverty

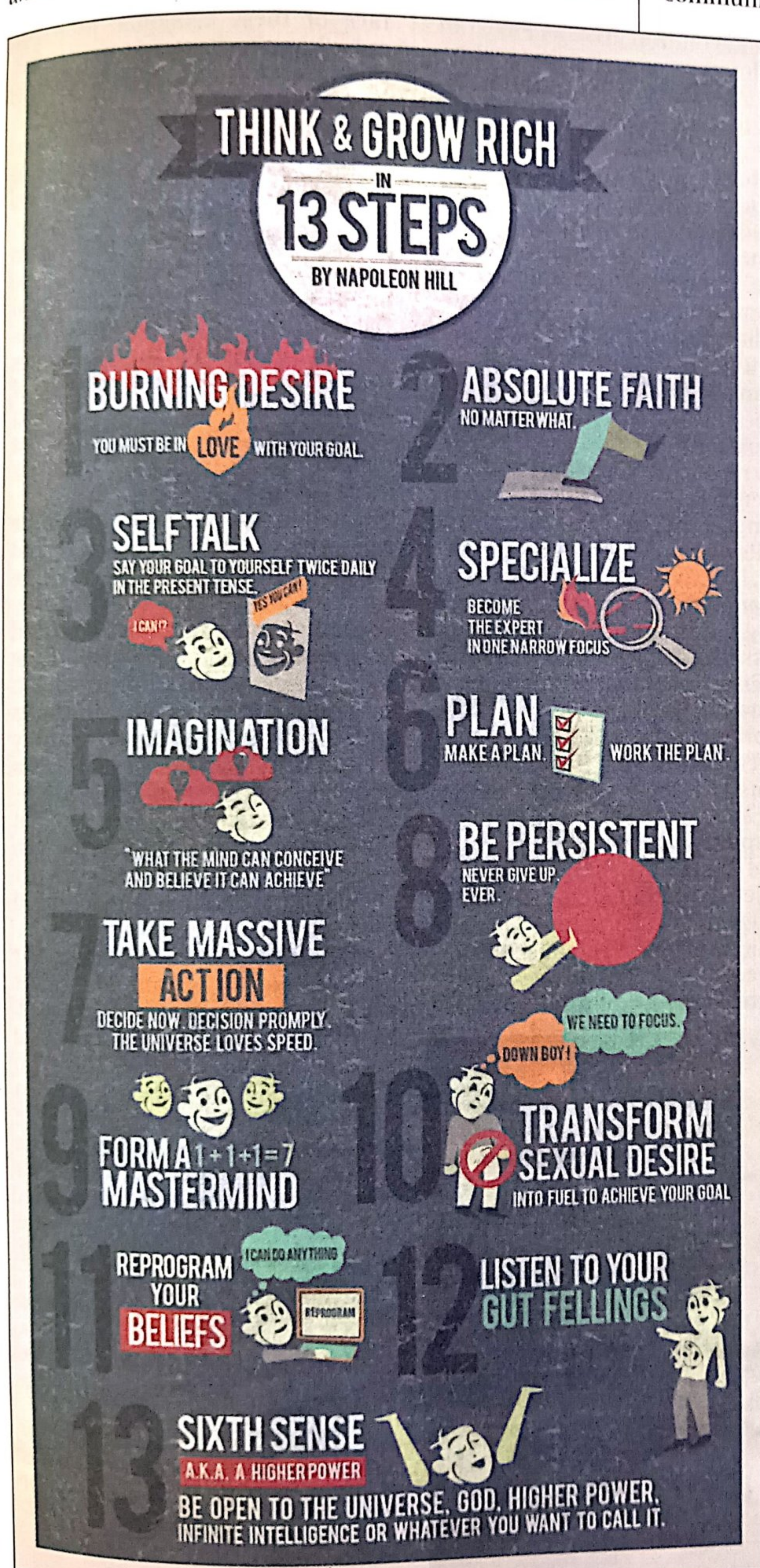
- Indifference
- Indecision
- Doubt
- Over-caution
- Procrastination

Fear of criticism robs man of his initiative and kills his power of imagination. An estimate showed that 75% of all people who visit physicians for professional services are suffering from hypochondria. Relieve yourself of all fears and worries. Accept death as an inescapable event. Protect your mind against negative influences. Do your self-analysis by asking relevant questions and answering them truthfully. It is a great fact that the one thing over which you have absolute control is your thoughts. Men with negative minds tried to convince Thomas A. Edison that he could not build a machine that would record and reproduce the human voice because they said that no one else had ever produced such a machine.

Conclusion

'Think and Grow Rich' is an insightful book that enables you to push your limits in all walks of life. It provides a deep understanding of how we can best use the power of our subconscious mind. I recommend this book to all readers. Do not go to bed without reading a few paragraphs from this book in sequence. ▢

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A complicated interplay of factors like political unrest, the Enlightenment ideals and social complaints led to the French Revolution, a significant historical event in the history of 18th-century Europe as well as that of the world. The bourgeoisie, urban workers and peasants were among the revolutionaries who, propelled by the financial crisis, pervasive inequality and onerous taxes, rose up against the tyrannical king and aristocracy. The movement was driven by important catalysts such as the Enlightenment ideology, economic troubles and the impact of revolutionary ideals from overseas, in addition to the leadership of individuals like Maximilien Robespierre and the Jacobins. Following the revolution, the monarchy was overthrown, the First Republic was established and a period of mass executions and political purges, known as the Reign of Terror, ensued. In the end, the French Revolution, despite its chaotic and violent nature, brought about important cultural changes which included the eradi-

Echoes
of the

French

Revolution

cation of feudal privileges, the emergence of secularism, and the spread of democratic principles. This laid the foundation for contemporary democracy and social justice movements.

Unsettling comparisons with the French Revolution arise as Pakistan struggles with growing inequality, prevalent unrest, soaring inflation, unrelenting instability, rising insecurity and, above all, a ubiquitous authoritarianism that serves as a sobering reminder for all involved. The current degradation of democratic ideals and a brazen theft of mandate are reminiscent of the same frustrations of the ruling elite that had ignited the French Revolution. Stakeholders in Pakistan need to learn from the past and be aware of the possible repercussions of their actions as history menacingly repeats itself.

The French Revolution is a lesson on the dangers of unbridled authority and disdaining the will of the people. Like the French Third Estate, disadvantaged groups in Pakistani society feel more and more oppressed and alienated from governing classes that put their own interests before the country's. The appropriation of mandates and the deterioration of democratic norms only help to widen these gaps and plant the seeds of public unhappiness.

Social instability in Pakistan is further exacerbated by inflation and economic hardships of the people, which are reminiscent of the economic imbalances that afflicted pre-Revolution France.

A Warning
for
Pakistan's
Stakeholders



Mansoor Tariq Khattak

The rising expenses amid the rising costs of basic needs for common people are causing a simmering dissatisfaction and fury that might explode into massive demonstrations and disruption. The ruling class's inaction in the face of these economic problems only fans the flames of unrest and fortifies the determination of those demanding change.

A powder keg of unrest that can burst any time is created by political repression, widespread corruption and insecurity and instability. Reminiscent of the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution, the deterioration of civil freedoms and the rule of law is accompanied by the arbitrary arrests and disappearances of political opponents. The pillars of Pakistani democracy are coming under more and more threat as dissent is suppressed and opposing voices are muffled.

The nation's problems are only made worse by autocratic behaviour and the concentration of power in the hands of a small elite. Similar to the absolutist monarchy that governed France prior to the Revolution, the ruling class in Pakistan exhibits a contempt for democratic principles and establishments, aiming to fortify its authority at the cost of liberties and rights of the populace. This view is only strengthened by the recent mandate theft and election tampering, which has further alienated the public and undermined the legitimacy of the administration. Stakeholders in Pakistan must fear the day when simmering anger explodes into full-blown upheaval, as echoes of the French upheaval become more and more apparent. The governing class has to understand that its acts have repercussions and that the populace will not put up with oppression and injustice in silence. Pakistan can only avoid the disastrous effects of a revolution by adopting democratic values, protecting the rule of law and resolving the justifiable complaints of the populace. Before it's too late, now is the moment to make a difference. ■

The writer is a PhD Scholar at Punjab University, Lahore, and is currently serving as an Assistant Director in BoR (KP).

The latest strides in AI are intensifying the imperative for digital transformation in a hybrid environment. Educators, grappling with AI literacy in their daily tasks and classrooms, now encounter the necessity to acquire a fresh set of teaching and learning skills, specifically centered on artificial intelligence and AI writing.

Let's take a look at a few of the many ways in which cultivating AI literacy and digital skills is crucial for students:

Future-ready workforce

As industries increasingly integrate AI technologies, a workforce well-versed in AI and digital skills becomes essential. Students equipped with these abilities are better positioned for future job markets that demand proficiency in handling advanced technologies.

Facilitates problem-solving and critical thinking

AI literacy fosters problem-solving skills and critical thinking. Understanding how AI works enables students to analyze complex issues, identify opportunities for automation, and develop innovative solutions, thereby enhancing their analytical abilities. It sharpens their mind and strengthens their intellectual muscles.

Promotes technological adaptability

In a world where technology evolves swiftly, having digital skills ensures adaptability. Students who are familiar with digital tools and platforms can quickly adapt to new technologies, making them more resilient in an ever-changing environment.

Supports lifelong skills

In the dynamic landscape of technology, foundational digital literacy equips students with essential knowledge and skills applicable to both current and future technologies. For instance, grasping fundamental concepts like input/output, application operation and

understanding hardware devices impart transferable knowledge. These basics serve as a solid foundation that students can apply to navigate and adapt to new and emerging technologies.

Enhances creativity

AI literacy can enhance creativity by providing tools and frameworks for students to explore new ideas and possibilities. Digital skills enable students to leverage creative software, design thinking principles and digital platforms to express and implement their innovative ideas. Technology provides the necessary tools to enhance their ability and give shape to their growth story.

Promotes data literacy

Understanding AI involves grasping data concepts. Digital skills contribute to data literacy, empowering students to analyze, interpret and draw meaningful insights from data. This skill is invaluable in a data-driven world.

Improves ethical awareness

AI comes with ethical considerations. Students with AI literacy are better equipped to understand the ethical implications of AI applications. This awareness is crucial for responsible and ethical decision-making in various fields. In addition to online safety, digital literacy encompasses teaching digital responsibility and the proficiency to consume and communicate information ethically in the online realm.

Enables global connectivity

Digital skills enable students to connect with

peers and resources globally. Online collaboration, communication and the ability to navigate digital platforms facilitate a more connected and collaborative learning experience.

Provides entrepreneurial opportunities

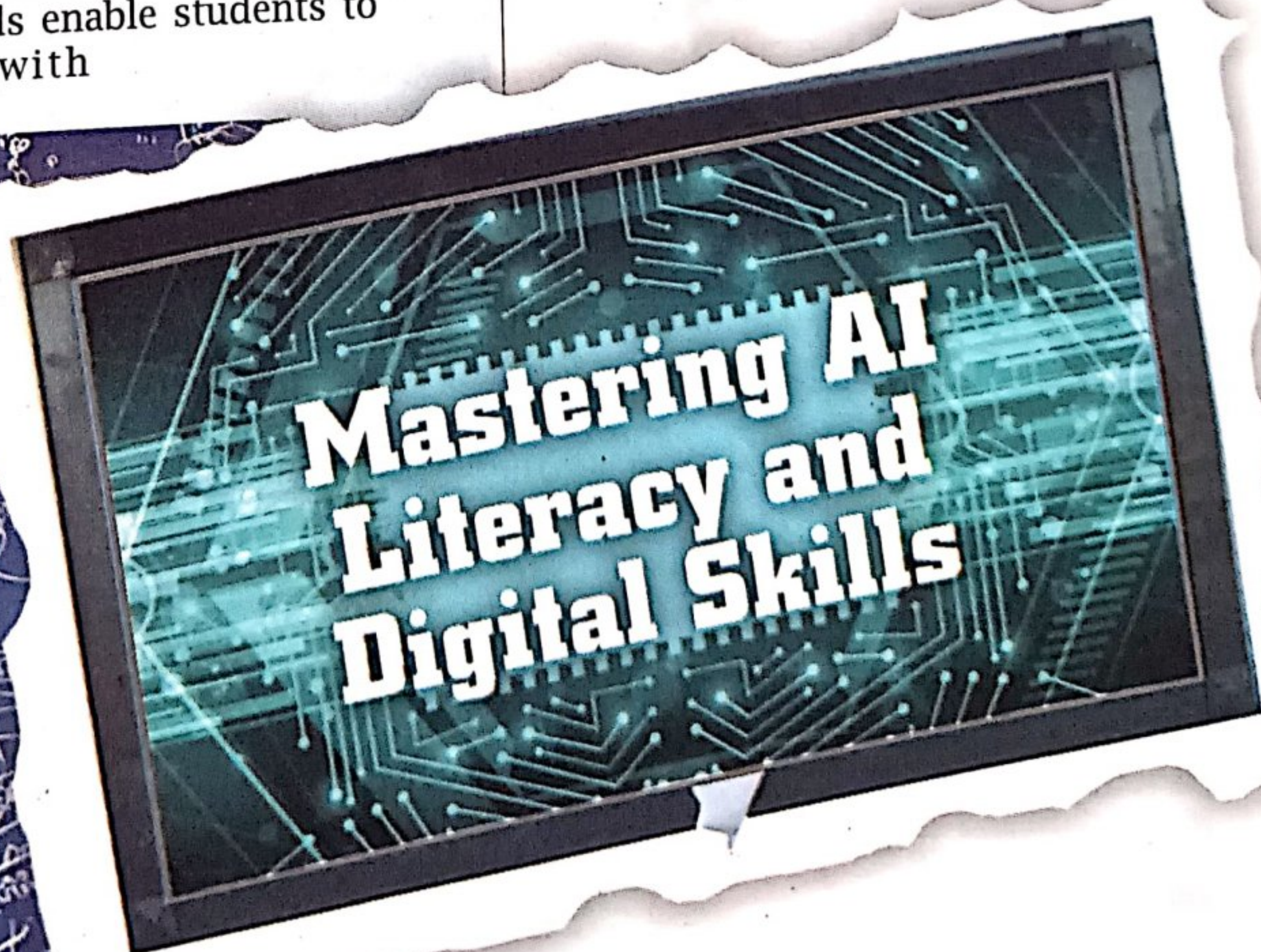
AI literacy opens doors to entrepreneurial opportunities. Students can leverage AI technologies to develop innovative solutions, create startups and contribute to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. It opens up an avenue with limitless possibilities.

Despite the widespread presence of technology in homes and educational settings, a significant proportion of individuals still possess limited digital literacy skills.

Prioritizing digital literacy in education becomes essential for institutions to enhance the digital skills of underrepresented groups. This proactive approach enables these students to acquire additional career opportunities and better positions them for success in the future.

Being AI-literate and possessing digital skills is not just about staying current, it's about preparing students for a future where technology plays a pivotal role. ■

The writer is a member of staff.



Muhammad Shahid Rafique



THE SILVER LINING

Investing in women empowerment is the future



In Pakistani society, due to its patriarchal structure, women often face oppression and discrimination. This pushes them into a marginalized position, despite the fact that they make up nearly half the country's population. This gender disparity hampers overall development, as reflected in Pakistan's consistently low ranking on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Parity Index. Consequently, there is a growing emphasis on women's education, as experts believe it is the key to improving their circumstances.

I was part of a recent study that investigated the correlation between increased female enrollment in universities and the empowerment of women. The sample pool encompassed both young women pursuing higher education and those already a part of the workforce. By examining the experiences and listening to the perspectives of both groups, we sought to uncover valuable insights into how educational attainments correlate with women's empowerment across various stages of life.

Increased female enrollment in public sector universities has, undoubtedly, influenced the lives of women in a positive manner. Those female students who are studying in public sector universities feel more empowered and are making the right choices in their lives without any inhibitions and fears of being opposed and oppressed by the male members of their families. Increased female enrollment has enabled them to be useful for their families and they are contributing substantially to their family income.

Findings reveal a positive relationship between increased female enrollment and women's empowerment. It was encouraging to see that some women were taking an active part in politics by not only joining political rallies but also convincing others to make the right use of their votes. In a country like ours, where women are oppressed and discriminated against and aren't allowed to exercise their right of free choice, taking part in politics and that too by

participating in political rallies is commendable indeed and will be instrumental in ensuring gender parity in the long run, a sine qua non for development.

The findings of the study also reveal that empowerment is being appreciated by male members of the family as well.

This is likely to transform deep-entrenched gender constructs as well. The policymakers need to use this as a vehicle to ensure gender parity in society, and while establishing new universities, the policymakers also need to ensure that women in rural areas have easy access.

Given that women comprise half the country's population, with a significant majority residing in rural areas, the implications of this research prompt several noteworthy recommendations.

Firstly, the establishment of more women universities, particularly in rural areas, is imperative.

Such strategic placement ensures accessibility, facilitating greater participation among women. Recognizing the constraints on female mobility, situating universities closer to their homes becomes essential, offering uninterrupted access to education.

This initiative not only addresses logistical challenges but also underscores a commitment to fostering educational equity and empowerment among women, thereby catalyzing socio-economic progress.

Secondly, for a nation grappling with the dual challenge of illiteracy and poverty, education emerges as a potent instrument for breaking the cycle of deprivation, particularly among marginalized groups, notably women.

The critical nexus between education and socio-economic empowerment cannot be overstated, especially in a context like Pakistan. Addressing gender disparities and poverty necessitates a concerted investment in education infrastructure and outreach programs. The research underscores that enhanced female enrollment is pivotal in fostering economic independence among women. Thus, prioritizing expenditure on female education

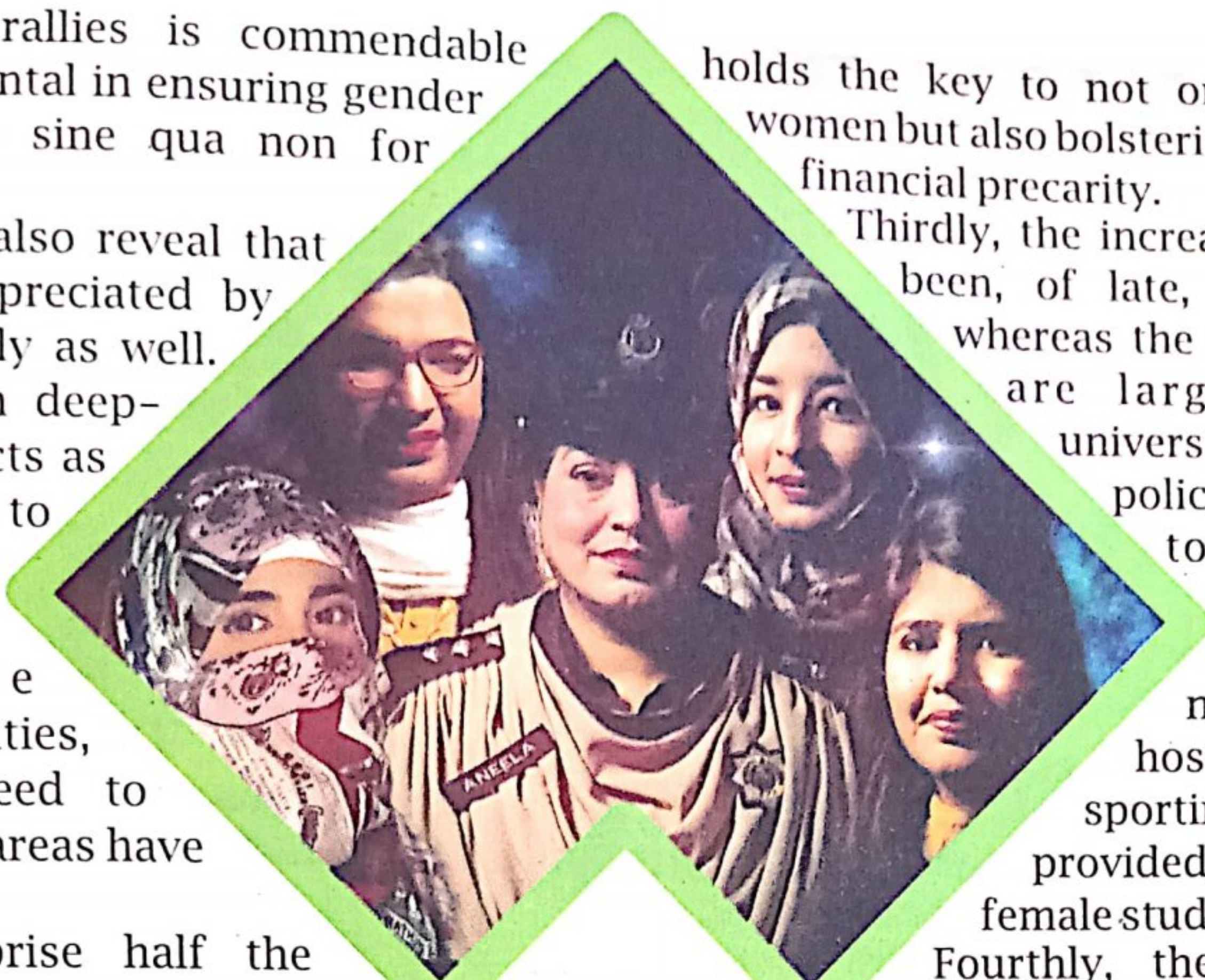
holds the key to not only uplifting impoverished women but also bolstering societal resilience against financial precarity.

Thirdly, the increased female enrollment has been, of late, witnessed in universities, whereas the facilities in the universities are largely male-centric. The universities' administration and the policymakers on the whole need to provide corresponding facilities to girls as well. For example, there is a pressing need to build more female hostels in the universities and sporting facilities also need to be provided to the growing number of female students.

Fourthly, there is a huge disconnect between the universities and the job market. Since women are half of the population, leaving this huge human resource untapped would be detrimental for the country. The government needs to encourage women to join the workforce by providing them with facilities that may not affect their roles as wives and mothers. They need to have more quotas in jobs as they do not get a level playing field in many ways.

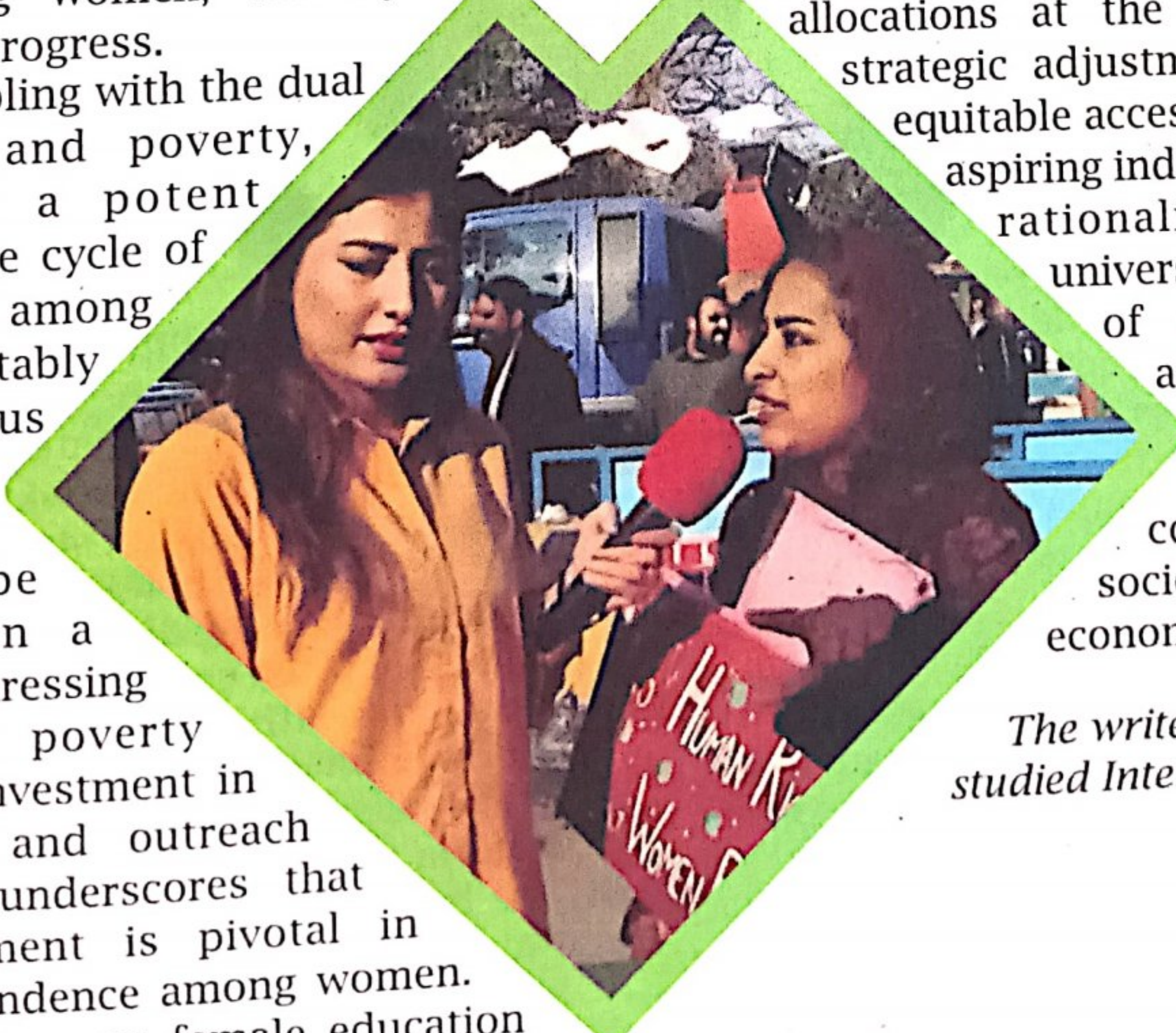
Finally, a pressing concern arises regarding the mismatch between the burgeoning number of students, particularly females, and the limited availability of seats in public sector universities. With the gradual rise in female enrollment, it becomes imperative for universities' administration to recalibrate seat allocations at the post-graduate level. This strategic adjustment is essential to ensure equitable access to higher education for all aspiring individuals. By reevaluating and rationalizing seat distribution, universities can uphold principles of fairness and meritocracy, affording every eager learner a fair opportunity to pursue advanced studies and contribute meaningfully to society's intellectual and socio-economic fabric. ■

The writer is a Chevening scholar and studied International Development at the University of Manchester



SEVERAL KEY INTERNATIONAL LAW INSTRUMENTS ADVOCATE FOR EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES OF LIFE, INCLUDING:

- THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)
- THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)
- THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR)
- INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR)
- THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)



My Health, My Right!

A look at some diseases prevalent in Pakistan

Dr. Hassaan Bin Zubair



Pakistan has a mixed health system that includes public, parastatal and private health facilities, besides those run by civil society, philanthropic contributors and donor agencies. According to a study by The Lancet, the performance of Pakistan's healthcare system as a whole places the country at 154th position among 195 nations. Being a developing nation, Pakistan struggles to maintain a suitable healthcare system in terms of quality and accessibility - only 2% of its GDP is allocated for total health expenses. The frequent cases of infectious and vaccine-preventable diseases in Pakistan illustrate that the country has a troubled healthcare system. Long-standing primary causes of death include viral hepatitis, dengue, TB, malaria, typhoid, HIV and cholera. These common health issues in Pakistan are a result of urban overpopulation, subpar sanitation, tainted water supplies and miserable socioeconomic conditions.

Diabetes

Seven million individuals in Pakistan have diabetes, making it the country with the highest prevalence of the condition. According to recent reports, every fourth person in the country has diabetes, and 25 percent of them do not know they have the problem. This disease stands out as a significant health concern due to its increasing prevalence and associated health and economic burdens.

Dengue Fever

Aedes mosquitoes carrying the dengue virus attack people and spread the mosquito-borne illness, known as dengue fever. It is a severe disease that, if untreated, can lead to serious illnesses like liver enlargement and circulatory system failure. This disease has significant economic impacts on affected individuals and communities; it imposes a high burden on healthcare systems and society, leading to substantial costs and social consequences.

Cancer

Cancer accounts for 8% of all fatalities in the country. The two most prevalent types of cancer in Pakistan are: lung and breast cancer. According to a recent study, breast cancer affects around one in every nine Pakistani women. Additionally, Pakistan has South Asia's largest tobacco consumption. Many cancer patients are not diagnosed



until they are in the advanced stages of the disease, and they frequently lack access to effective therapy.

HIV/AIDS

According to UNAIDS, around 100,000 HIV+ cases exist in Pakistan. The use of contaminated syringes by drug addicts is the main contributor to this disease in Pakistan. With more than 50,000 cases, Sindh has the highest rate of HIV infection.

Ischemic Heart Disease

In Pakistan, ischemic heart disease is responsible for 12.22% of deaths per year. The three main risk factors, smoking, obesity, and high blood pressure, are all quite prevalent in Pakistan. Heart disease occurs due to an unhealthy lifestyle and a lack of awareness, just like other diseases. Public health awareness efforts and simple access to healthcare services can significantly lower the occurrence of such diseases.

Hepatitis

Hepatitis A and E are still widespread illnesses in Pakistan, even though vaccinations are available. It is a viral liver disease spread by polluted water or bad food. Along with the vaccine, safe drinking water, wholesome food, improved sanitation, and handwashing are all powerful approaches to combat the disease.

Stroke

Approximately 350,000 cases are reported each year in Pakistan. High blood pressure is the main cause of strokes. In Pakistan, people do not have access to wholesome food. A daily wage cannot maintain a healthy diet. They cannot purchase salads and fruits. They just consume what they can afford. The most common health issues in Pakistan, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol occur due to the use of low-quality oils and ghee.

Malaria

The bite of a mosquito, which breeds in contaminated water, is what causes malaria. Malaria spreads easily, given the size of the slum population. Malaria can prove

EXAM PACK

World Health Day

World Health Day is a global health awareness day celebrated on 7 April every year, under the sponsorship of the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as other related organizations. The First World Health Assembly decided to celebrate World Health Day on April 7 of each year, with effect from 1950. World Health Day is held to mark WHO's founding and is seen as an opportunity by the organization to drive worldwide attention to a subject of major importance for global health each year. World Health Day is one of eight official global health annual campaigns marked by WHO, along with World Tuberculosis Day, World Immunization Week, World Malaria Day, World No Tobacco Day, World AIDS Day, World Blood Donor Day, and World Hepatitis Day. To address these types of challenges, the theme for World Health Day 2024 is "My health, my right".

fatal without proper treatment. Slum-dwellers lack education and knowledge, so they turn to over-the-counter drugs to cure their illnesses. As a result, malaria has developed drug resistance.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious illness that affects the



lungs and spreads through coughing and sneezing. According to the WHO, up to two-thirds of tuberculosis patients who receive inadequate care die. Tuberculosis is one of the common health issues in Pakistan that might have permanent effects.

Maternal and Child Health

Maternal health is one of the most significant health problems in Pakistan. Women have to fend for themselves since they lack status and many women's health issues are taboo. A woman's state of health directly affects the health of her unborn child. The main contributor to diseases affecting mothers and their newborns is the absence of adequate healthcare facilities in rural and other underdeveloped areas. Neonatal problems account for 16.67% of all deaths, which is a result of this disregard for the baby's health.

Facilities

There are many issues with the health system in Pakistan. The private sector provides services to almost 70% of the Pakistani population. Private hospitals and healthcare facilities often outperform their public counterparts in terms of overall healthcare quality and patient satisfaction. However, the majority of residents of Pakistan's

rural areas have little to no access to basic medical care and are at significant risk of contracting various illnesses. Pakistan is one of the top ten nations in the world without access to clean drinking water. In rural communities with high levels of poverty, the majority of residents lack access to restrooms. Therefore, additional issues like bacterial infection or diarrhoea may arise as a result of inadequate facilities. The high rate of infant and maternal fatalities is largely attributed to inadequate nutrition for young children. Over half of young children under the age of five are stunted, and over 40% of them are underweight.

Way forward

The government must take strong steps to ensure that Pakistanis have access to high-quality healthcare. Furthermore, each of us must make a small contribution, as collectively, we can have a substantial impact on the public health issues in Pakistan.

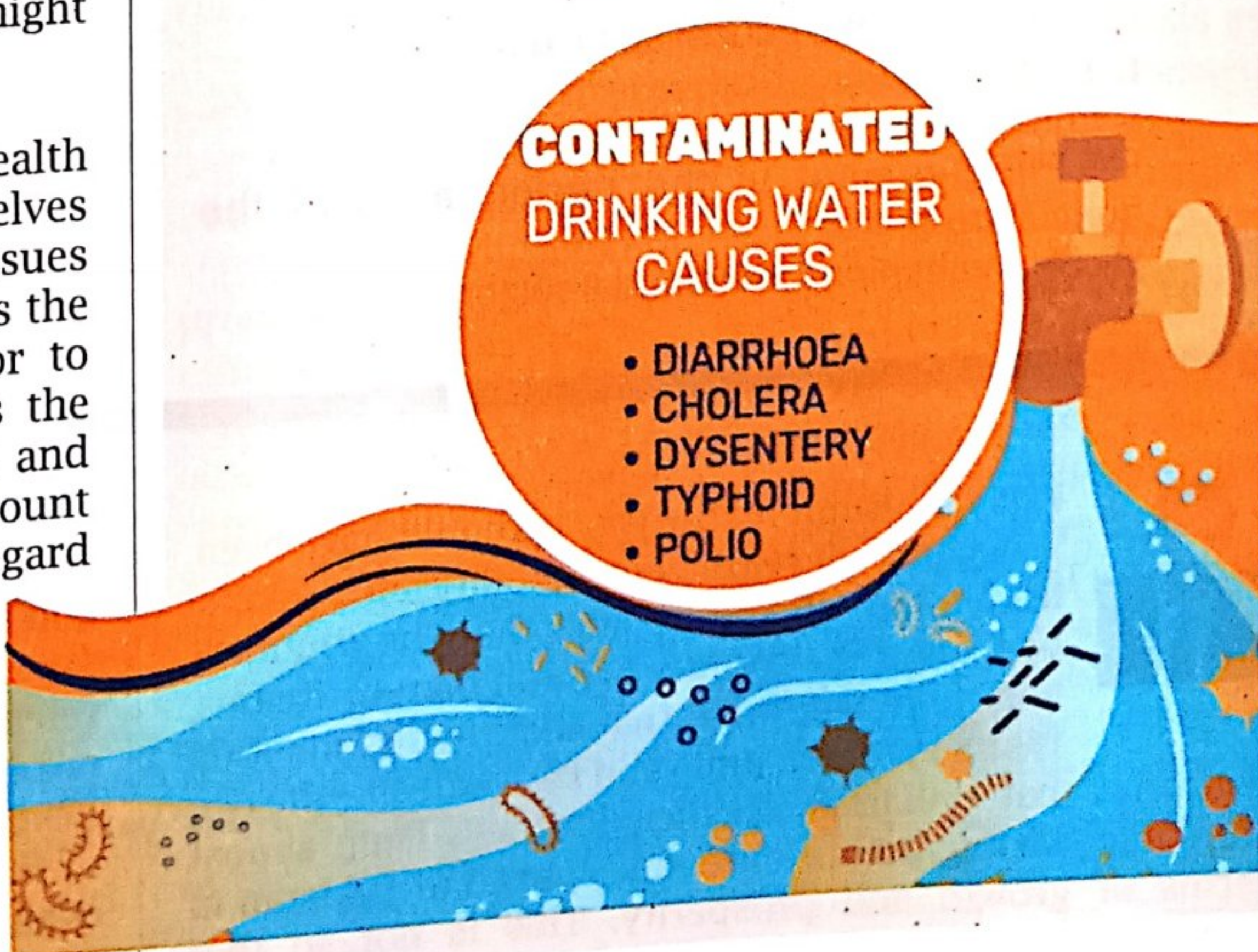
- Promote vaccinations.
- Raise healthcare standards. The government must ensure that hospitals have enough resources to serve patients efficiently.
- Draw up policies to combat global warming as it is a major cause of public health problems. Increased greenhouse gas emissions from the manufacturing and disposal of goods contribute to global warming.
- Recycling and reusing our household goods is an additional measure we can take to mitigate health issues in Pakistan.
- Increase the taxes on tobacco.

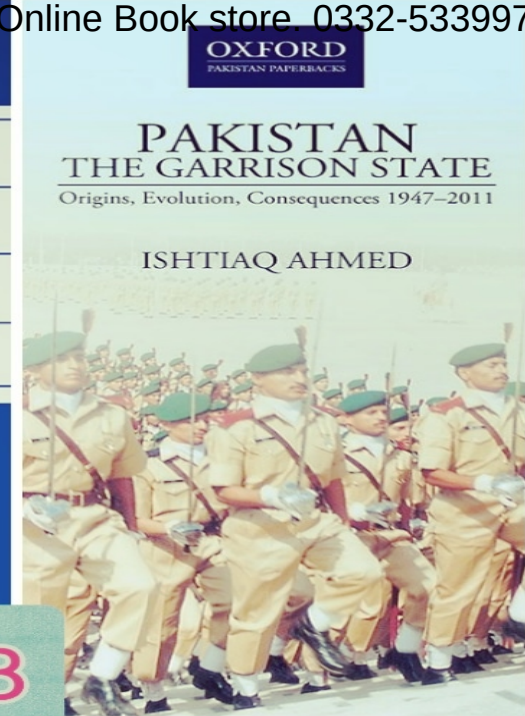
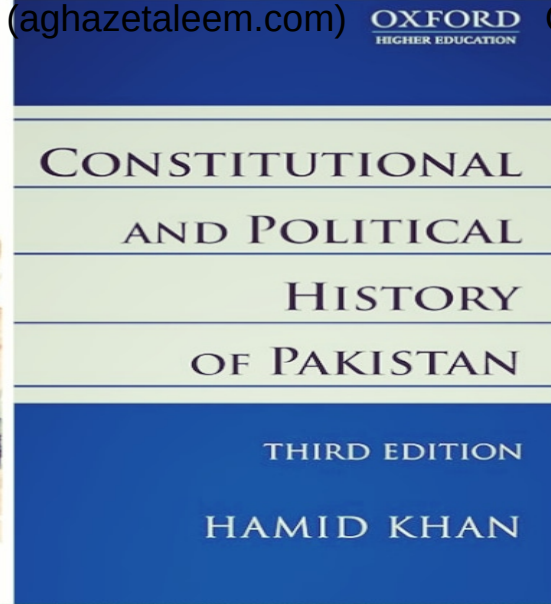
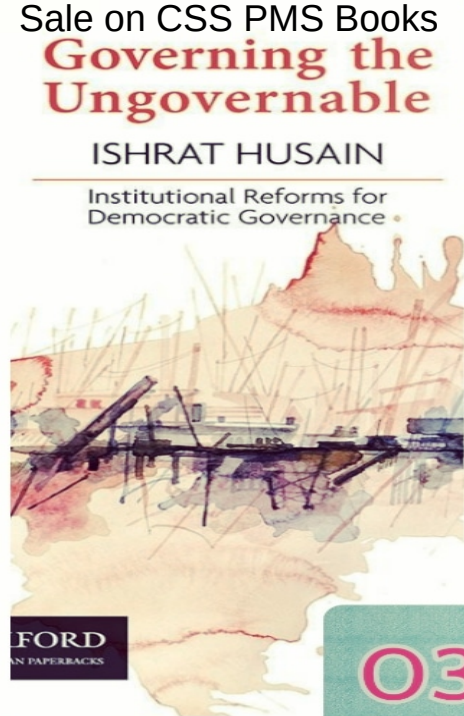
Due to the concentration of hospitals in large cities, inequality in the distribution of healthcare services, and the consequent indirect costs, accessing these facilities is challenging for patients in remote areas. Also, emergency conditions require immediate management and response plans. Therefore, the government should also establish more public facilities and/or incentivize investments in private health facilities to ensure healthcare accessibility in remote areas. 

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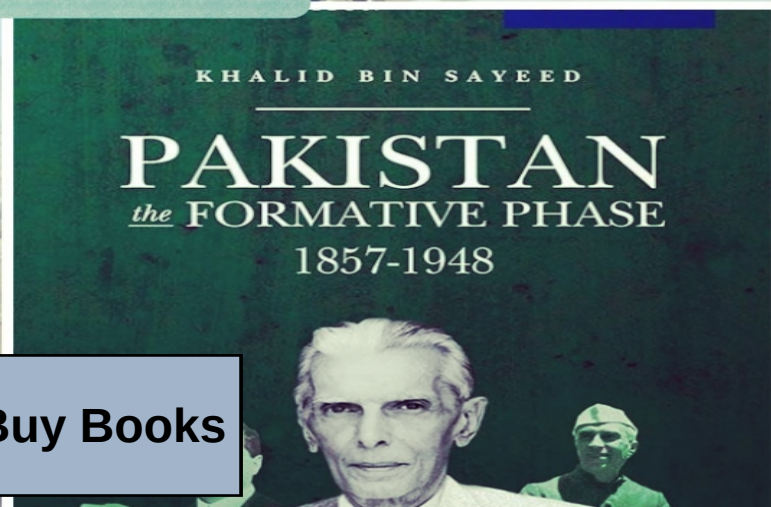
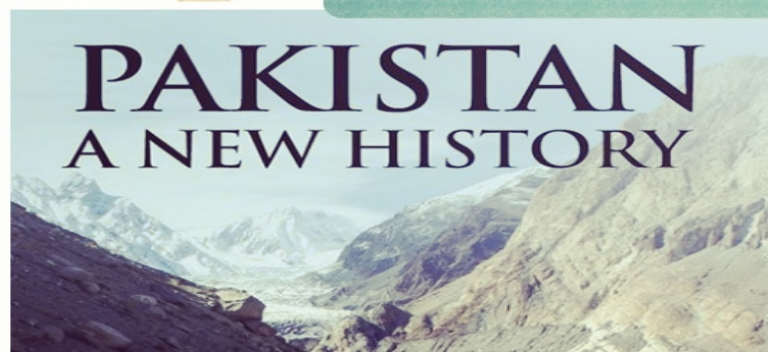
CONTAMINATED DRINKING WATER CAUSES

- DIARRHOEA
- CHOLERA
- DYSENTERY
- TYPHOID
- POLIO

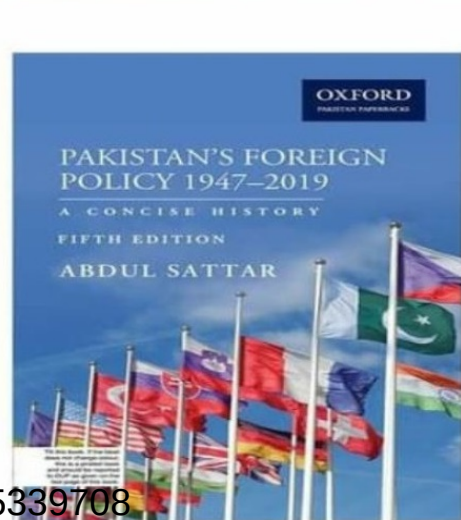
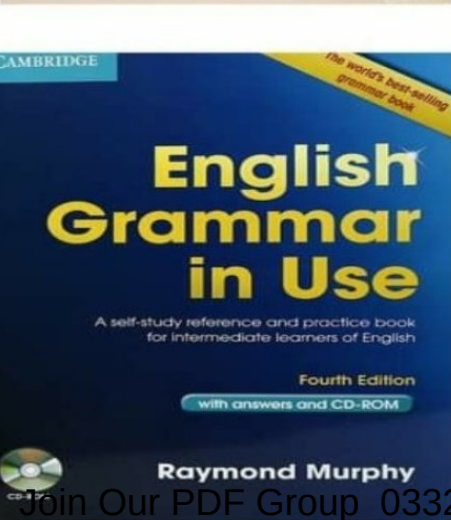
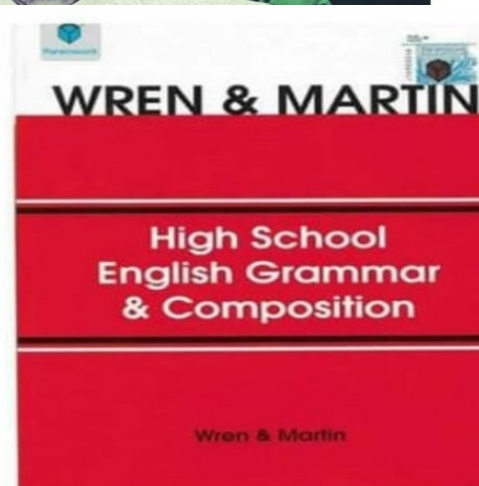
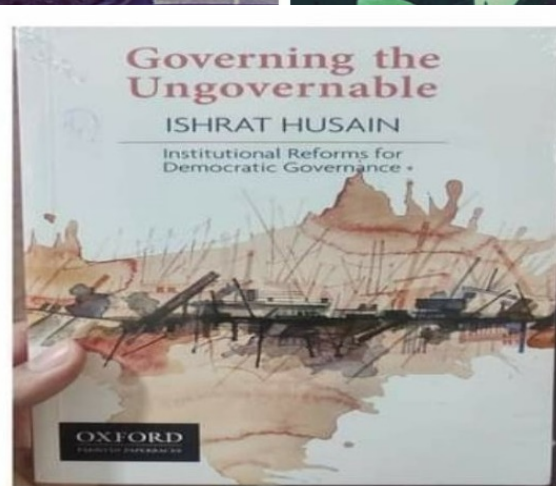
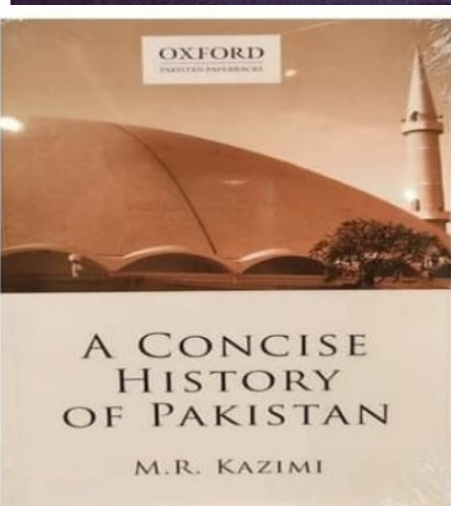




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Pathways to Pakistan's Prosperity



Outline

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5. Recommended measures for successfully tackling the obstacles on the way to prosperity

- i. Consensus-based decision-making using available forums
- ii. Signing a charter of economy
- iii. Introduction of acute austerity measures
- iv. Wholehearted implementation of the National Action Plan

6. Conclusion



Pakistan is not on the way it should have been. Prosperity, development, stability and regional leadership: all the dreams that the founders had about the country are still merely dreams, and more painful is that their materialization is still far away. India and Bangladesh - the two countries that embarked on their journeys from almost the same starting points - are miles ahead of Pakistan in terms of growth and prosperity. This is not so that

Pakistan can never break the shackles of backwardness and start moving towards a bright future, but, realistically speaking, the goal is too ambitious to achieve sans relentless efforts based on ingenuous intentions. There are a number of pathways that can help Pakistan reach the destination of prosperity, development and growth. Some of these include political stability, optimum utilization of available resources, minimization of corruption, elimination of the energy crisis and a focus on strengthening

Asim Raza

agricultural and industrial sectors of the country. Quite understandably, treading on the path towards prosperity will never be hurdle-free, as a number of impediments and challenges will be there at every milestone. Some meticulously devised strategies, however, can definitely be helpful in overcoming all the problems and helping the journey continue in the right direction.

Prosperity is a relatively subjective term having different meanings and interpretations for different people. Some associate this term strictly with economic well-being and affluence, while others consider it a relatively broader term encompassing not only economic aspects but also social and political dimensions. At the national level, a country can be termed prosperous if its social and economic indicators are good. The most common criterion to assess the economic situation of a country is its gross domestic product (GDP). Where the size of the GDP indicates how big the economy of a country is, its annual growth rate depicts the overall performance of the economy during the concerned year. In the social sector, the Human Development Index (HDI) is the most popular indicator to measure the social progress of a country. The HDI is based on three variables: (i) life expectancy at the time of birth, (ii) knowledge and (iii) standard of living. Likewise, the Multidimensional Poverty Index reflects the extent of poverty in a state. Unfortunately, Pakistan's performance on all three indicators is utterly disappointing. Pakistan's GDP growth rate in FY 2022-23 remained at 0.29% as compared with 7.2% of India and 6.03% of Bangladesh. Likewise, in HDI report 2023-24, Pakistan has been ranked 164 amongst 193 countries.

Though the present situation of Pakistan does not offer much optimism regarding prosperity and growth, it is, at the same time, an irrefutable reality that there exist a multitude of pathways that may lead Pakistan to the destination it has been aiming for since its creation.

To start with, political stability is the most significant requirement for this purpose as it has a direct connection with economic growth and social development. Foreign and local investment, formulation of farsighted policies and their across-the-board implementation, functioning of the administrative machinery in an effective and smooth way, optimal utilization of available resources, and prevalence of the rule of law; in short, every ingredient of prosperity hinges upon the existence of political stability in the country. The history of Pakistan makes it evident that whenever there was political stability, the country moved towards prosperity. Likewise, every period of political uncertainty has had detrimental impacts on the development of the country; the era of the 1990s and the two-year period after the removal of Imran Khan as

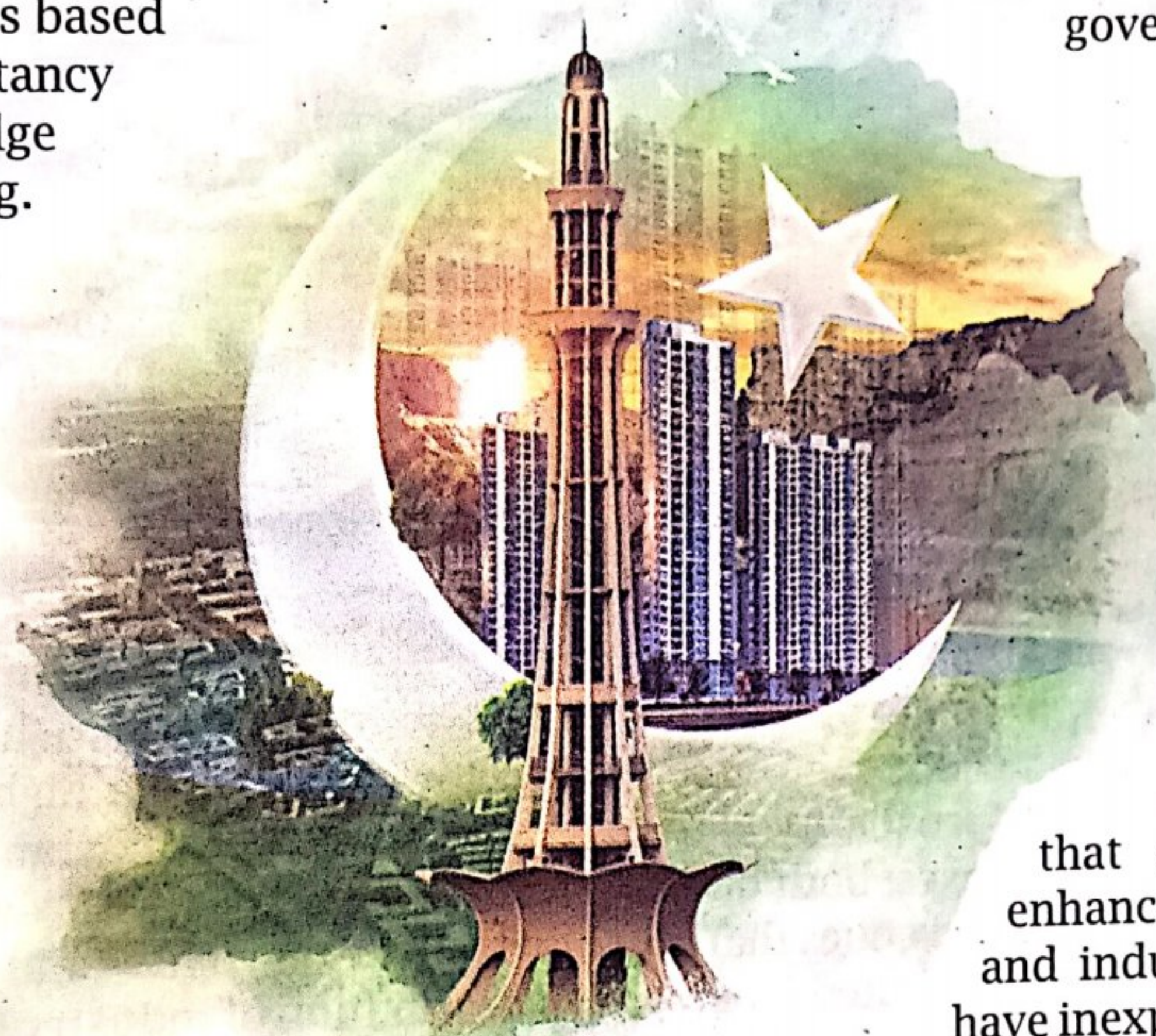
the premier are the quintessence of the same thing. Political stability will, therefore, have to be ensured if the country is to move towards prosperity and growth.

Another pathway to prosperity is self-sufficiency in energy. Currently, Pakistan not only faces an acute shortage of energy, but the energy that it produces is also too expensive to be afforded by domestic consumers. The per-unit electricity price that a Pakistani has to pay is approximately Rs 60, which is 500% more than what a consumer pays in India or Bangladesh. High charges, along with frequent power cuts, wreak havoc not only on the social lives of the people but also on the country's economy. Many industrial units have moved to Bangladesh just because there is no energy crisis there that can increase their costs of production. The same is the case with natural gas as the annual production of 4 bcf is too little to meet the national demand that has now surpassed 6 bcf. If the energy crisis continues, Pakistan won't be able to break this vicious cycle. As the performance of the agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors of the country is largely dependent on the availability of cheap energy, the government needs to give the issue

the importance and focus it deserves. Many economists opine that if Pakistan utilizes all its available resources to improve the production, transmission and distribution of energy for three consecutive years, the country can overcome the problem and a new phase of development may start. The argument does make sense, as it is quite understandable that energy sufficiency results in enhanced productivity in agriculture and industrial sectors since crops will have inexpensive inputs and factories will have an uninterrupted supply of energy at

reasonable prices. Improved performance in these two sectors will not only decrease our imports but will also result in the enhancement of exports, and the overall impact will be the end of the foreign exchange crisis as well. The energy crisis, therefore, needs to be addressed at every cost for a prosperous Pakistan.

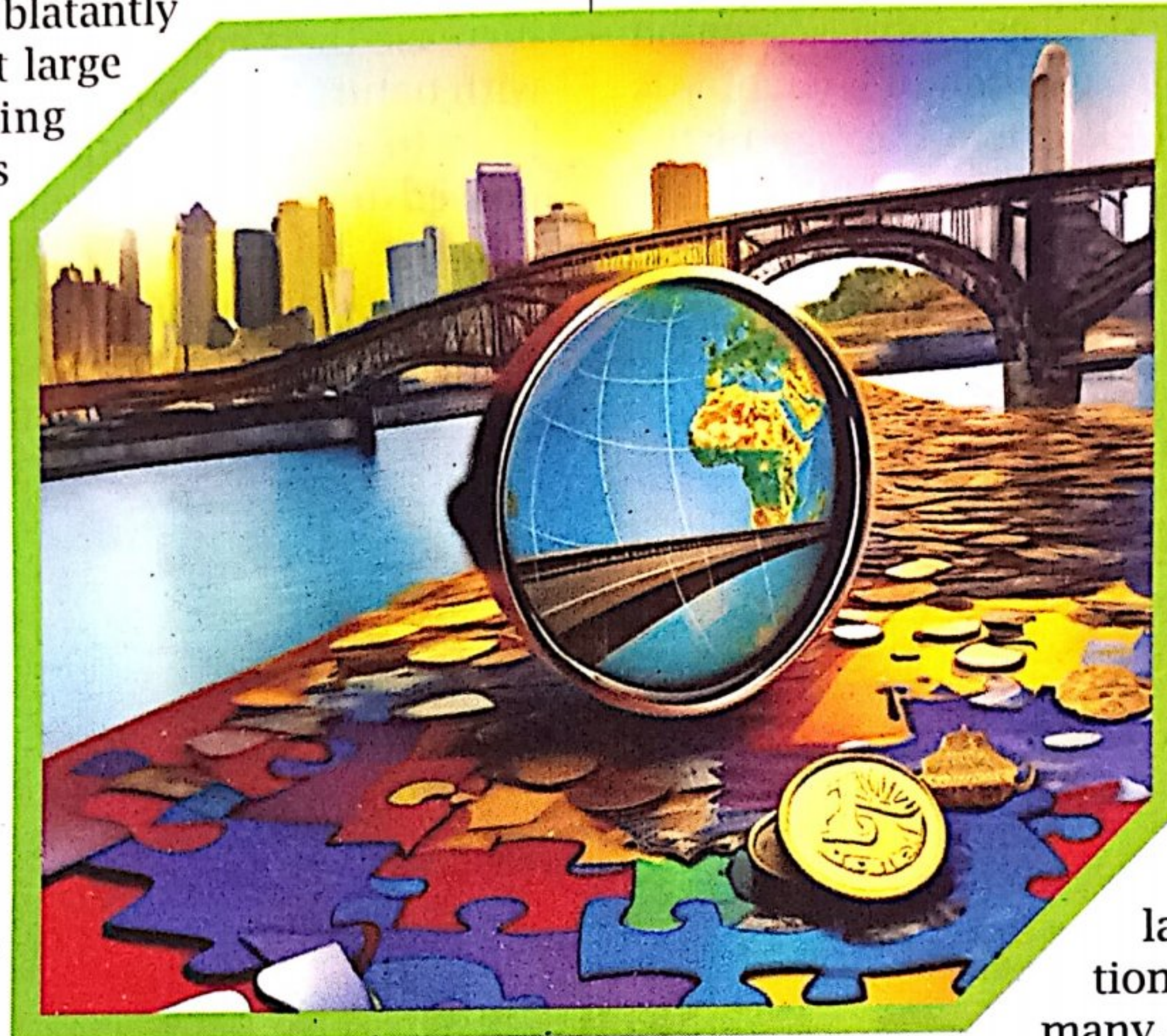
The third pathway to Pakistan's prosperity is the redesigning of our education model as it is miserably unable to produce responsible members of society, effective and efficient workers for the job market and innovative leaders for government and private organizations. The absence of the rule of law, the misuse of available resources, unemployment and decreased productivity are some of the many ills for which the education sector is to be directly blamed. In Pakistan, we have to promote innovation and creativity and focus on inculcating discipline and morality in our students before making them learn anything else. We need to produce entrepreneurs and scientists; we need to produce knowledgeable farmers and skilled industrial workers; and we need to



produce citizens who are assiduous, incorruptible and patriotic. More focus on technical and vocational education as well as on building the character of students should be the basic purpose of our education model.

The next thing that is imperative for Pakistan's prosperity is the rule of law. In the absence of the rule of law, neither a talented and well-suited person can get an opportunity to serve Pakistan nor is an investor able to invest in a secure way. In Pakistan, if judges are unable to dispense justice, if public offices are rife with corruption, if policies feather a few nests instead of serving the general public at large, if roads and bridges fail to complete their projected life span, if highways and state land are under illegal encroachment, if criminals blatantly commit crimes and remain at large without any fear of being apprehended, if jails serve as a nursery of learning different types of crimes and offenses, if public hospitals promote private clinics and if media openly sells itself to favor or disfavor some particular groups or parties; this is nothing but the absence of rule of law that should be blamed for the harrowing situation Pakistan is confronted with today. In Pakistan, the law has become a net in which only small fish get caught. We will have to ensure strict adherence to rules and laws, and this will definitely take us to the destination of prosperity and glory.

Another road that can lead Pakistan to prosperity is the enhancement of the tax-to-GDP ratio. Taxes, both direct and indirect, are the major component of revenues that fill the federal divisible pool and are distributed among provinces and the federal government for their ultimate utilization in developmental and to meet the current expenditure. The tax-to-GDP ratio in the world's developed countries ranges from 15% to 30%; however, the same for Pakistan is less than 10%. The biggest reason for the poor tax collection is FBR's inability to collect direct taxes. Corruption, lack of necessary technology and undue waivers and concessions have plagued the overall performance of tax authorities, and had there not been so much contribution from indirect taxes, the tax-to-GDP ratio would have been below 4%. The government needs to work on a complete overhaul of the tax system of the country, as there is plenty of room for improvement. A country where barely 5 million people out of 245 million population submit tax returns can certainly change its fortune by merely focusing on this single aspect. Necessary reforms in the tax model to enhance the share of direct taxes, technological interventions to minimize corruption and tax pilferage and complete freedom for the tax-imposing authorities can be some of the many measures that can prove to be helpful in improving the tax-to-GDP ratio in Pakistan.



In the same vein, the agriculture sector of Pakistan also offers a major pathway that can be helpful for us in reaching the destination of prosperity and progress. Despite the fact that Pakistan is blessed with all such factors as are required for the optimal performance of the agriculture sector, the contribution of this sector to the national GDP hovers around 20%, which is far below its potential. Less per-acre yield and vast tracts of uncultivated land are the two major issues that have marred the agriculture sector. All the related departments can bring about a visible change in the performance of the sector if they start working assiduously. Focus on farmers' training, timely provision of all needed inputs and leasing

uncultivated land to the corporate sector can be some positive steps for the acquisition of desired goals. The Department of Agriculture Extension should engage agri-scientists to develop new varieties of crops that require less water, are more resistant to pests and diseases, and can give more yields. Likewise, the tools and techniques that are already admitted to be beneficial throughout the world should be practiced widely: tunnel farming, zero-tillage technology, laser land levelling and pipe irrigation techniques being some of the many.

Just like agriculture, the industrial sector can also be a highway, not just a pathway, to the prosperity of Pakistan. Pakistan's industrial sector comprises large- and small-scale manufacturing units, construction units and slaughtering businesses. The contribution of industry to the overall GDP hovers around 20 percent, that too is much less than the available potential. The availability of cheap raw materials from the agriculture sector, and inexpensive labour are the two factors that can lead to an industrial boom in Pakistan. However, things are entirely different on the ground, as industrialists are disinvesting their monies due to an unrelenting political instability, persistent energy shortages and the corruption-ridden environment of the public sector. During the past two decades, a number of textile units have been relocated to Bangladesh, and they have significantly contributed to the growth of their host country, which is now considered the epitome of success and development and an example to emulate for all the developing nations of the world. To help the industrial sector to reactivate, the federal and provincial governments need to devise a joint policy to attract investors by resolving their energy- and security-related issues. Facilitation in the procedure and provision of soft loans can also be helpful for this purpose. Pakistan has to establish economic zones under CPEC; their establishment should not be delayed further and all the impediments thereto should be removed. A healthy industrial

sector will not only create jobs for the unemployed youth, but will also strengthen the exports sector of the country, which will eventually resolve the issue of foreign exchange reserves as well.

And how can one forget the reformation of the bureaucratic and administrative structures that, too, can lead Pakistan to growth and development? This is the bureaucratic structure of a country that initially plays a significant role in policy formation by assisting and guiding the elected representatives of the people, and then implements the devised policies in an efficient and effective way. The bureaucratic structure of Pakistan has failed to deliver well in both of these dimensions. At the time of policymaking, bureaucrats adopt an obsequious approach to placate their political bosses by saying "yes, boss" to their every wish and demand. This results in the devising of policies that are flawed in a number of ways and can never achieve the targeted goals. If there is nothing wrong with the policies, the corrupt and maladroitness approach of public servants becomes an impediment to their successfully accomplishing the targets. The delay in the timely completion of development projects that has now become an accepted norm of business in Pakistan is a big testimony to this fact. Bureaucratic reforms encompassing a fair mechanism of appointments and postings and an objective criteria of performance evaluation can definitely be helpful in improving the administrative setup and making the country move towards progress and development.

Although the pathways discussed above can lead Pakistan to the destination of prosperity and progress, treading along these pathways is certainly not an easy task as there are a number of impediments and hurdles to stop the journey. Firstly, the elected government may not be audacious enough to be ready to capitalise on its popularity and make harsh economic decisions. Secondly, many interventions need financial support for their execution, yet the exchequer of Pakistan is barely supporting the burden of even the current expenditure. Thirdly, the venom of corruption now runs in the blood of the nation, and it is very difficult to execute the decided strategies in the desired way. Fourthly, security-related issues at internal and external fronts still exist

to suck the attention of the government and the available resources, and finally, the continuity of the policies is always a big question, as every new government in Pakistan considers it its very first task to undo the policies of the previous regime regardless of their utility and effectiveness.

Though, the obstacles and impediments on the pathways to Pakistan's prosperity seem insurmountable, some scrupulously planned measures can certainly be helpful in tackling them in an effective

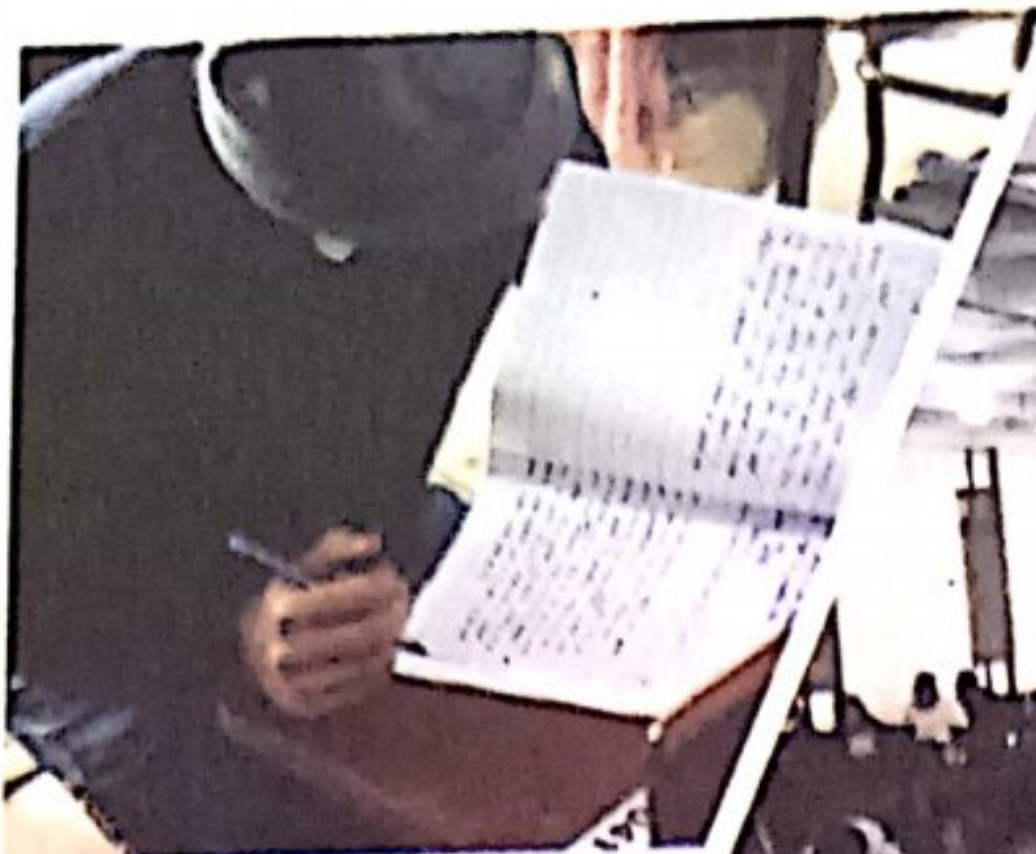
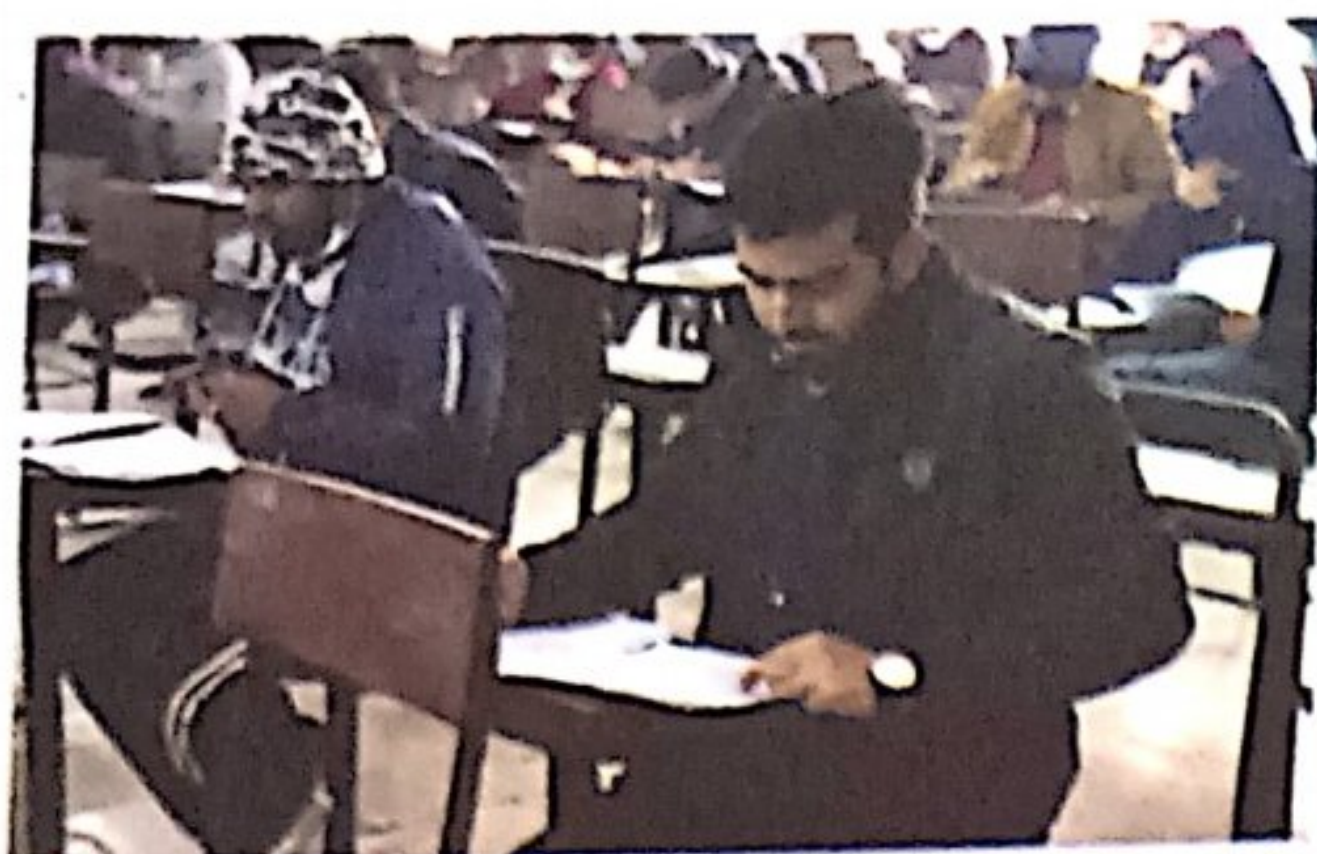
way. These measures include the frequent use of collective forums for making tough decisions so that the burden of unpopularity is equally shared by all the political parties, particularly the government and the opposition. The CCI, National Economic Council, and Special Committee of Parliamentarians on Economic Affairs can be relatively safer platforms for making such decisions that are imperative for the survival of the country. Secondly, all the political parties should sign a charter of economy, just like the Charter of Democracy, to guarantee that they will not do politics on the economic fronts of the country and will support the implementation of the economic plans in the best possible way. Thirdly, austerity measures should be introduced and strictly implemented throughout the country, at least until the wheels of the nation's vehicles start moving and catch some reasonable pace. There should be no issue, for instance, if markets are closed at night to save electricity, air conditioners are totally banned except in hospitals, imports of luxuries are completely restricted, salaries in the public sector are not increased, new roads and parks are not constructed, and official visits and tours are restricted for some period of time. Likewise, the menace of terrorism should be controlled through the wholehearted implementation of the National Action Plan 2015, many dimensions of which are still unimplemented despite the lapse of nine years since its devising.

In a nutshell, despite the horribly torrid situation all around, there are still a number of pathways that can lead Pakistan to the destination of prosperity, growth and success. These pathways start at political, economic, social and administrative junctures yet definitely end at the single destination: prosperity. While treading along these pathways, a number of barriers and obstacles will emerge and they will have to be tackled prudently and courageously. Some sagaciously and scrupulously devised policies, like the intervention of technology, the introduction of austerity measures, and the creation and utilization of platforms for consensus-based decisions, can definitely be helpful in the continuity of the journey in the face of all types of predicaments. As far as the prosperity of Pakistan is concerned, there should be no doubt that

the goal can never be achieved unless every single Pakistani plays a role in its acquisition. The quantum and nature of this role will definitely vary from person to person, but its presence and persistence will always be required. The earlier every Pakistani realizes it, the better it is. ■

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Solved Papers Compulsory Subjects

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However, balancing urbanization with green spaces is becoming increasingly challenging. Nonetheless, sustainable urban planning is essential to create and maintain parks, tree-lined avenues and green rooftops, ensuring a harmonious cohabitation between human progress and the environment.

Title: An all-encompassing role of green spaces

[Original Paragraph: 240 words
Précis: 83 words]

Comprehension

- The main theme of the given paragraph is the role of educators in this era of technology and it asserts that although we have no option but to embrace modern technology, it must be done while giving some consideration to ethical and moral aspects.
- Education is adapting itself to the notion of e-learning, where digital platforms and virtual classrooms are ubiquitous. In this state of affairs, formulating inclusive policies will be a daunting challenge that can be tackled by doing so with a mindful and ethical approach, for which the role of teachers will be of pivotal importance.
- The concept of the digital divide, as narrated in this passage, is the disparity in terms of having access to the Internet and related new technologies. So, it becomes all the more important to draw up inclusive policies as it is vital to ensure that progress aligns with the principles of equity, inclusivity and ethical awareness.
- As artificial intelligence has intruded into various aspects of our lives, it has blurred the boundaries between humans and machines. So, there is a

English (Précis & Composition)

Synonyms

Antonyms

- Ubiquitous:**
(a) Scarce
(b) *Present everywhere*
(c) Unique (d) Limited
- Pernicious:**
(a) Beneficial (b) *Harmful*
(c) Lucid (d) Fervent
- Mellifluous:**
(a) Grating
(b) *Smooth and sweet-sounding*
(c) Dissonant (d) Discordant
- Ephemeral:**
(a) Enduring (b) Eternal
(c) *Short-lived* (d) Persistent
- Astute:**
(a) Indifferent (b) Pensive
(c) Stupid (d) *Insightful*
- Enthrall:**
(a) Bore (b) *Captivate*
(c) Fascinate (d) Disinterest
- Sycophant:**
(a) Admirer (b) Advocate
(c) Critic (d) *Flatterer*
- Assuage:**
(a) Aggravate (b) Intensify
(c) *Soothe* (d) Alleviate
- Reticent:**
(a) Talkative (b) Loquacious
(c) Vocal (d) *Reserved*
- Incessant:**
(a) Sporadic (b) Intermittent
(c) *Persistent* (d) Halted

- Esoteric:**
(a) Obvious (b) Understood by few
(c) Extraneous (d) *Common*
- Squalid:**
(a) Dirty (b) Wretched
(c) Lavish (d) *Clean*
- Taciturn:**
(a) *Loquacious* (b) Voluble
(c) Reticent (d) Silent
- Constrict:**
(a) Tighten (b) Contract
(c) *Expand* (d) Release
- Loquacious:**
(a) Talkative (b) Silent
(c) *Reticent* (d) Reserved
- Indolent:**
(a) Lazy (b) Active
(c) Lethargic (d) *Energetic*
- Coalesce:**
(a) Merge (b) Combine
(c) Disperse (d) *Separate*
- Rancor:**
(a) Animosity (b) Bitterness
(c) Hostility (d) *Amicability*
- Acquiesce:**
(a) Comply (b) Resist
(c) Agree (d) *Deny*
- Debilitate:**
(a) *Fortify* (b) Weaken
(c) Strengthen (d) Enervate

Précis

Urban green spaces provide tranquillity and recreation for people as well as a sanctuary for wildlife, creating a perfect balance between urban

development and environmental preservation. These spaces foster community bonds as they are used to hold recreational events, promoting, in return, the well-being of the people.

pressing need for incorporating ethics into policies so as to navigate this path with wisdom. This is the only way to live harmoniously and peacefully in today's digital world.

5. According to the paragraph, individuals must shoulder the collective responsibility of fostering a culture of ethics and humanity in the digital realm. We should not be slaves to machines; rather, we should use them to the benefit of humanity.

Correction

1. Chewing slowly, I thought the pepperoni pizza tasted delicious.
2. Kicking and screaming, the toddler was dragged out of the grocery store by his exasperated father.
3. Holding a red balloon, a young girl stood in the corner.
4. Who do you like more?
5. He ordered a meal that was high in protein from the restaurant.
6. My favorite pizza topping is mushrooms; they are really tasty. I also like pizza with olives.
7. The group asked to hear the report that Shirley and I prepared.
8. I managed to finish the painting.

Punctuation

- (i) The cordless vacuum, one of the least interesting of the household appliances, got its start as a moon drill.
- (ii) Dr. Seuss' books are famous for their delightful rhymes and nonsense words. 'If I Ran a Zoo', however, likely gave us the real-word nerd.
- (iii) There are many theories about Edgar Allan Poe's mysterious death, including rabies, alcoholism and a truly strange possibility; he may have been a victim of a voter-fraud scheme.
- (iv) The film critic said, "One of the most misquoted lines in movie history is 'Play it again, Sam'."
- (v) Poorly named animals include: the flying fox, which is really a bat; the electric eel, which is really a knifefish; and the honey badger, which is the only member of its genus and species.
- (vi) The Haskell Opera House sits right on the US-Canadian border, with the stage in Quebec and many of the seats in Vermont.
- (vii) Most carnivorous plants attract and digest insects and other invertebrates, but some large pitcher plants have been known to digest frogs, rodents and other vertebrates.
- (viii) Harvey is a good driver. Moreover, he is a very friendly one.

Prepositions

- (i) His research is characterized by a deep understanding of genetic mutation.
- (ii) The solution is contingent on various factors.
- (iii) The experiment is predicated on

- the assumption of uniform conditions.
- (iv) The project is commensurate with the skills of the research team.
- (v) The methodology is impervious to external influence.
- (vi) The discussion oscillated between two main points.
- (vii) His proposal hinges on securing adequate funding.
- (viii) The model is contingent upon accurate data inputs.

Pairs of Words

- i. Creak:** Make a harsh, grating sound
Sentence: The door creaked when I opened it slowly.
Creek: A natural stream of water smaller than a river.
Sentence: The creek dried up every summer.
- ii. Palate:** The upper surface of the mouth that separates the oral and nasal cavities
Sentence: His throat felt raw from howling and his tongue and palate were dry.
Palette: A board that provides a flat surface on which artists mix paints and the range of colours used.
Sentence: The designer's palette consisted mostly of earth tones.
- iii. Elicit:** Deduce or construe
Sentence: We elicited some interesting linguistic data from the native informant
Illicit: Illegitimate, unlawful
Sentence: She had an illicit affair with her boss.
- iv. Peel:** Sound loudly and sonorously
Sentence: The bells were peeling.
Peel: Remove the skin from
Sentence: Ali was peeling an orange.
- v. Taut:** Tight, having no give or slack; tightly drawn
Sentence: Her nerves were as taut as the strings of a bow.
Taught: Accustom gradually to some action or attitude
Sentence: The child is taught to obey her parents.
- vi. Faint:** Lacking strength or vigour
Sentence: There was a faint smile on Aliya's lips.
Feint: A distracting or deceptive manoeuvre
Sentence: The boxer made a feint with his right, then followed with a left hook.
- viii. Rheum:** A watery discharge from the mucous membranes (especially from the eyes or nose)
Sentence: Her allergies caused a rheum discharge from her eyes and nose
Room: Chance, possibility, opportunity
Sentence: There is always room for improvement.
- viii. Wreak:** inflict, impose, levy

Sentence: Guerilla fighters wreaked their vengeance on those they considered enemies.

Reek: smell, stink

Sentence: My clothes reek of tobacco smoke.

Translation

When the Palestinian conflict, created by the United Nations itself, appeared before it for settlement, this representative world body not only recognized the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination but also set the formula for the solution of these problems. A two-state solution of the Palestinian conflict was proposed, but the UN resolutions passed in this regard have not been implemented in the last more than seven decades. On the contrary, Israeli soldiers, at the behest of the United States, are committing bloodbath of innocent Palestinians even to this day, and the Gaza Strip has been completely devastated in the war during the last two and a half months. In this war, Israeli troops, along with US reinforcements, have brutally martyred more than 20,000 Palestinians, including women and children, leaving no place for the survivors who are now facing death due to lack of food and medicine.

General Knowledge-I (General Science & Ability)

1. In fish liver oil, there is:

- (a) Vitamin A only
- (b) Vitamin D only
- (c) Vitamin A and Vitamin E
- (d) **Vitamin A and Vitamin D**

2. When day and night are equal?

- (a) 23rd February and 21st September
- (b) **21st March and 23rd September**
- (c) 23rd March and 21st September
- (d) None of these

3. What is the total number of combinations of 09 things taken 03 at a time?

- (a) 18
- (b) 27
- (c) 48
- (d) **84**

4. The chemical formula for alum is:

- (a) **$KAl(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12H_2O$**
- (b) $KSi(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12H_2O$
- (c) $KA1(SO_4)_2 \cdot 8H_2O$
- (d) None of these

5. If the radius of a circle is increased three times, then its area is increased:

- (a) Three times
- (b) Six times
- (c) **Nine times**
- (d) None of these

6. One degree of longitude on the equator is equal to a distance of:

- (a) 49 miles
- (b) **69 miles**
- (c) 39 miles
- (d) 60 miles

7. The protein molecule is made of:

- (a) Alkaloids
- (b) Nucleosides
- (c) Short range chain of amino acids
- (d) **Long range chain of amino acids**

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8. The minimum amount of vitamin stored in the human body is of:
 (a) Vitamin D (b) **Vitamin C**
 (c) Vitamin E (d) Vitamin A
9. The isotopes of any element contain equal number of:
 (a) **Protons** (b) Neutrons
 (c) Both electrons and protons
 (d) None of these
10. The pH of soil is raised using:
 (a) **Lime stone** (b) Gypsum
 (c) Urea (d) None of these
11. Which of the following is used for measuring distance?
 (a) Coulomb (b) **Light year**
 (c) Farad (d) Curie
12. Which of the following contains a greater number of carbon atoms in one mole of each compound?
 (a) Chloroform (b) Methanol
 (c) Water (d) **Ethanol**
13. A pencil dipped in water appears bent due to:
 (a) Reflection (b) Diffraction
 (c) **Refraction** (d) None of these
14. Fishes die outside the water due to:
 (a) Carbon monoxide
 (b) Oxygen
 (c) Sunlight
 (d) **Non-absorption of oxygen**
15. In dementia, a person:
 (a) Loses his weight
 (b) Loses thinking and writing
 (c) **Loses thinking, remembering, and reasoning**
 (d) All of these
16. Earthquake is measured by the instrument:
 (a) Wave guide (b) Barometer
 (c) **Seismograph** (d) Hydrometer
17. A cyclone is formed:
 (a) When the warm air rises upward over the ocean
 (b) When moist air rises upward over the ocean
 (c) When moist air is pressed downward over the ocean
 (d) **When warm, moist air rises upward over the ocean**
18. Why red light is used in traffic signal for danger?
 (a) Due to short wavelength
 (b) Due to high frequency
 (c) It has long wavelength and high frequency
 (d) **It has long wavelength and short frequency**
19. The heavy water is:
 (a) Denoted by D_2O and contains simple hydrogen
 (b) Denoted by H_2O and contains deuterium
 (c) **Denoted by D_2O and contains deuterium**
 (d) Denoted by H_2O and contains simple hydrogen
20. The ionosphere is located within the thermosphere and extends:

- (a) From 60–300 km above the Earth's surface
 (b) From 50–200 km above the Earth's surface
 (c) From 50–300 km above the Earth's surface
 (d) **None of the above**

General Knowledge-II (Current Affairs)

1. The recent escalation in Palestinian-Israeli Conflict occurred on _____ 2023.
 (a) 6 October (b) **7 October**
 (c) 8 October (d) None of these
2. The book "The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics" was written by:
 (a) Stephen P. Cohen
 (b) Andrew Linklater
 (c) **Andrew Small** (d) None of these
3. The 2023 G20 Summit held in India on _____ September.
 (a) 5–6 (b) 7–8
 (c) 9–10 (d) None of these
4. An extraordinary meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers on Palestine conflict held in October 2023 in:
 (a) Bahrain (b) **Saudi Arabia**
 (c) Qatar (d) None of these
5. Krakow is a city in:
 (a) **Poland** (b) Ukraine
 (c) Russia (d) None of these
6. The headquarters of African Union is situated in:
 (a) **Ethiopia** (b) Niger
 (c) Nigeria (d) None of these
7. The capital of Costa Rica is:
 (a) **San Jose** (b) Tegucigalpa
 (c) Managua (d) None of these
8. TASS is the _____ state-owned news agency.
 (a) French (b) **Russian**
 (c) German (d) None of these
9. The Boao Forum for Asia was founded in:
 (a) **2001** (b) 2002
 (c) 2003 (d) None of these
10. Article 25(A) of the Pakistan's Constitution deals with:
 (a) Right to Health
 (b) Right to Vote
 (c) **Right to Education**
 (d) None of these
11. World Snooker Championship 2023 held in:
 (a) **England** (b) Scotland
 (c) Ireland (d) None of these
12. _____ is the Nigerian currency.
 (a) Nigerian Dollar (b) Nigerian Lira
 (c) **Nigerian Naira** (d) None of these
13. There are _____ Special Economic Zones in CPEC.
 (a) Six (b) Seven
 (c) Eight (d) **None of these**
14. Nobel Prize Winner for Literature Mr. Louise Gluck belongs to:
 (a) **USA** (b) Canada
 (c) Australia (d) None of these

15. The book "The United States and the Turmoil in Afghanistan and Pakistan" was written by:
 (a) **Ahmed Rashid** (b) Sarah Chayes
 (c) Andrew Exum (d) None of these
16. The UN Climate Change Conference was held in November-December 2023 in:
 (a) Copenhagen (b) Bonn
 (c) Brussels (d) **None of these**
17. There are _____ members in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.
 (a) 12 (b) 13
 (c) **14** (d) None of these
18. World Tourism Day is observed every year on:
 (a) 25 September (b) 26 September
 (c) **27 September** (d) None of these
19. _____ is the current Chancellor of Germany.
 (a) Angela Merkel (b) **Olaf Scholz**
 (c) Robert Habeck (d) None of these
20. The 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit took place on 18-19 September 2023 in:
 (a) **New York** (b) Washington DC
 (c) Chicago (d) None of these

General Knowledge-III (Pakistan Affairs)

1. Sindh River has been mentioned in:
 (a) Yajur Ved (b) Saam Ved
 (c) **Rig Ved** (d) Arath Ved
2. Pakistan was re-elected for the seventh time to the UN Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on:
 (a) 11 Feb 2022 (b) 19 March 2022
 (c) 17 April 2021 (d) **13 April 2022**
3. Who wrote the Book "Kitab-ul-Hind"?
 (a) Mujaddid Alf Sani
 (b) Shah Waliullah
 (c) Syed Ahmed Shahed
 (d) **Al-Beruni**
4. What is considered the greatest monument of Pakistan-China collaboration?
 (a) Karachi-Gawadar Highway
 (b) **Karakoram Highway**
 (c) Lahore Orange Line
 (d) K2 Base Camp
5. Which mountain range Separates Pakistan and Afghanistan?
 (a) Karakoram (b) Pamirs
 (c) **The Hindu Kush** (d) Kirthar
6. Who was the first leader of opposition in the first National Assembly constituted under the 1962 constitution of Pakistan?
 (a) **Sardar Bahadur Khan**
 (b) Hussain Shaheed
 (c) Syed Fakhar Imam
 (d) Ghulam Haider Wain
7. What was the official language declared in 1956 constitution?
 (a) Urdu (b) Bengali
 (c) Hindi (d) **Both (a) & (b)**
8. Pakistan conducted its first

successful test fire of Submarine Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM) Babur-3 having a range of 450 kilometre on:

- (a) 9 January 2017
(b) 11 January 2017
(c) 13 January 2017
(d) 15 January 2017

9. Abdul Rabb Nishtar was first _____ of Pakistan.

- (a) Interior Minister
(b) Defense Minister
(c) **Communication Minister**
(d) None of these

10. Pakistan is one of the largest contributors to the UN Peacekeeping missions, constituting over _____ of UN's total deployment.

- (a) 7% (b) **9%**
(c) 11% (d) 13%

11. What is the total cost of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)?

- (a) \$72 Billion (b) **\$62 Billion**
(c) \$26 Billion (d) \$32 Billion

12. Operation "Swift Retort" was launched by:

- (a) USA against Afghanistan
(b) **Pakistan against India**
(c) India against Pakistan
(d) None of these

13. In which country Pakistan opened its first embassy?

- (a) China (b) Afghanistan
(c) **Iran** (d) India

14. Pakistan is NOT a member of the following organization:

- (a) D-8 (b) **G-20**
(c) SCO (d) United Nations

15. The name of the first Pakistani aircraft is:

- (a) JF-17 Thunder (b) **JF-8 Thunder**
(c) JF-9 Thunder (d) JF-11 Thunder

16. In which of the following districts, the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif is located? in

- (a) Hyderabad (b) **Matiari**
(c) Dadu (d) Thatta

17. An agreement on the demarcation of boundaries was concluded between Pakistan and China in the year:

- (a) 1961 (b) **1962**
(c) 1963 (d) 1964

18. Who was the Prime Minister of India at the time of Tashkent agreement?

- (a) **Lal Bahadur Shastri**

(b) Indra Gandhi

(c) Rajiv Gandhi (d) None of these

19. No person shall be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan unless he has been a judge of a High Court for a period of:

- (a) Five years (b) Seven years
(c) Nine years (d) **Fifteen years**

20. Who is Pakistan's first female mountaineer to conquer Mount Everest?

- (a) Nazia Parveen (b) **Samina Baig**
(c) Mahoor Shahzad (d) Benazir Bhutto

Islamic Studies

1. To which Clan of Quraish Hazrat Umer (رضي الله عنه) belongs?

- (a) Banu Umayya (b) Banu Taim
(c) **Banu Adi** (d) Banu Sahm

2. Author of the book "Al-Hisbah fil Islam" is:

- (a) Ibn-e-Rushd (b) Ibn Abdul Bar
(c) **Ibn-e-Temia** (d) Ibn-e-Qayyam

3. How many heads of Zakat are mentioned in Quran?

- (a) 3 (b) 6
(c) 7 (d) **8**

4. Hadith which is directly narrated by a Tabi is called:

- (a) Marfoo (b) Maqtoo
(c) Muquf (d) **Mursal**

5. Do not raise your voice above the voice of the Prophet (ﷺ). This order is in Surah?

- (a) Al-Ahzab (b) Al-Maidah
(c) **Al-Hujurat** (d) Al-Najam

6. Original name of the host of Holy Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Ayub Ansari, (رضي الله عنه) is:

- (a) Zaid bin Sabit (b) **Khalid bin Zaid**
(c) Qais bin Saad (d) Hanzla bin Aamir

7. How many Jews were killed in the Ghazwa Khayber?

- (a) 91 (b) **93**
(c) 96 (d) 98

8. Tarjman Al-Qur'an is the title of Companion:

- (a) **Abdullah bin Abbas**
(b) Muaz bin Jabl
(c) Abdullah bin Masood
(d) Usman bin Affan

9. Istishab is the term of:

- (a) Science of Tassawuf
(b) Science of Hadith
(c) Science of Tafseer
(d) **Science of Fiqh**

10. For how many years were the

Muslims imprisoned in Sha'b Abi Talib in Makkah?

- (a) 2 (b) **3**
(c) 4 (d) 5

11. Sahifa-e-Hammam bin Manbah is contained in its entirety in which book?

- (a) Sahih Bukhari
(b) Sahih Muslim
(c) **Musnad Ahmad**
(d) Sunan Tirmazi

12. The name of Hazrat Zaid bin Haritha (رضي الله عنه) is mentioned in which Surah?

- (a) Al-Saf (b) **Al-Ahzab**
(c) Bani Israel (d) Yaseen

13. How many Surahs are there on the name of the Prophets?

- (a) 3 (b) **4**
(c) 5 (d) 6

14. The order of Tayammum is given in which Surah?

- (a) **An-Nisa** (b) Al-Maidah
(c) Al-e-Imran (d) None of these

15. Who was the founder of Dar-ul-Hikmah?

- (a) Jabir bin Hayan
(b) Mamun-ur-Rasheed
(c) **Abo Jafar Mansoor**
(d) Khalifa Umar bin Abdul Aziz

16. Which Caliph was the first to set the prescribed punishment of drinking at eighty lashes?

- (a) Hazrat Ali (b) Hazrat Usman
(c) **Hazrat Umar** (d) Hazrat Abu Bakr

17. Imam Muslim Bin Hijaj Qusheri died in:

- (a) 260 Hijri (b) **261 Hijri**
(c) 262 Hijri (d) 263 Hijri

18. Which Imam has been more extensive in the use of Masal-e-Mursala?

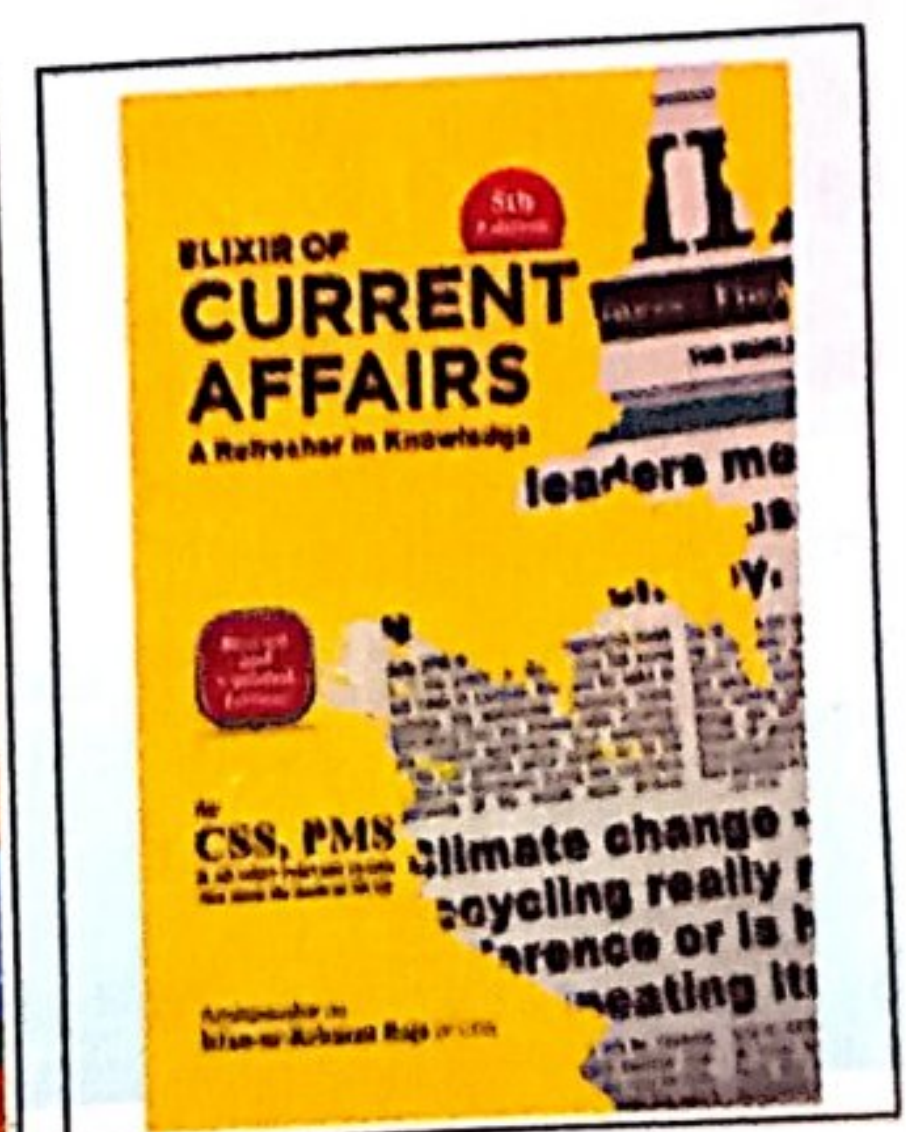
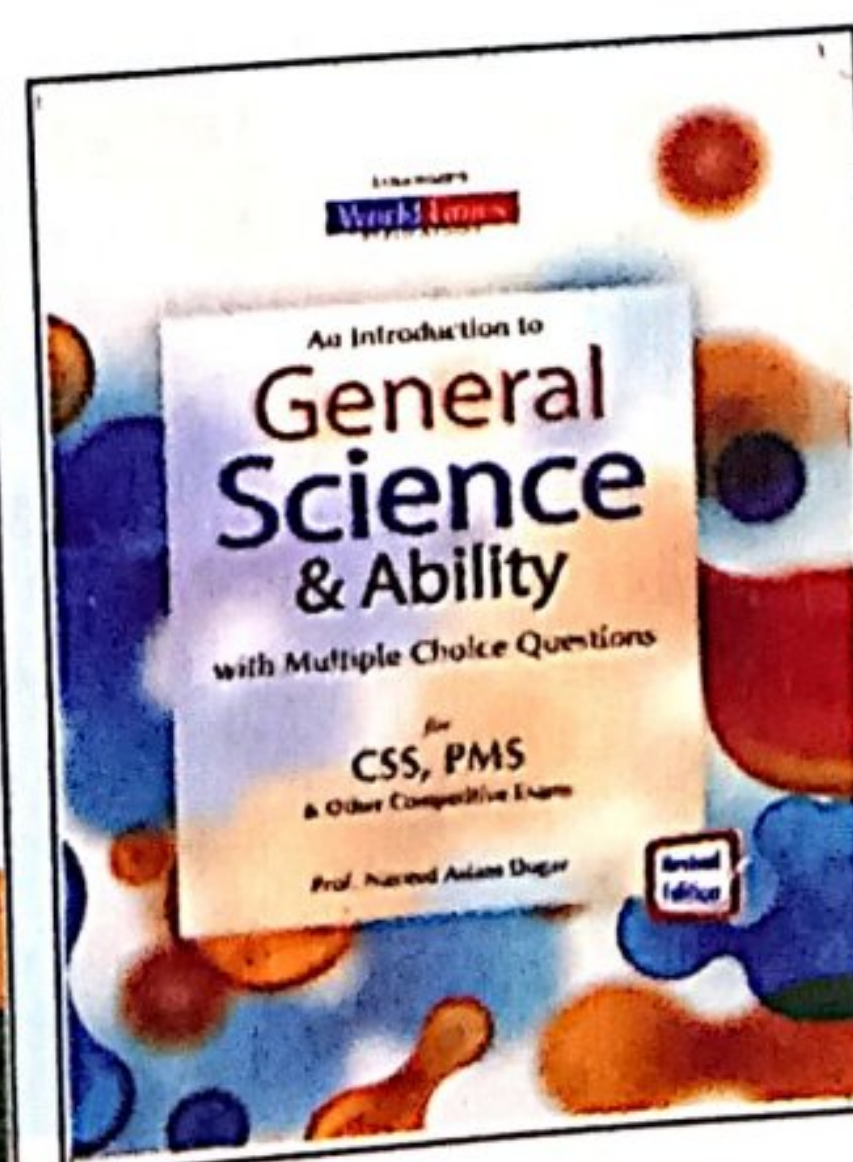
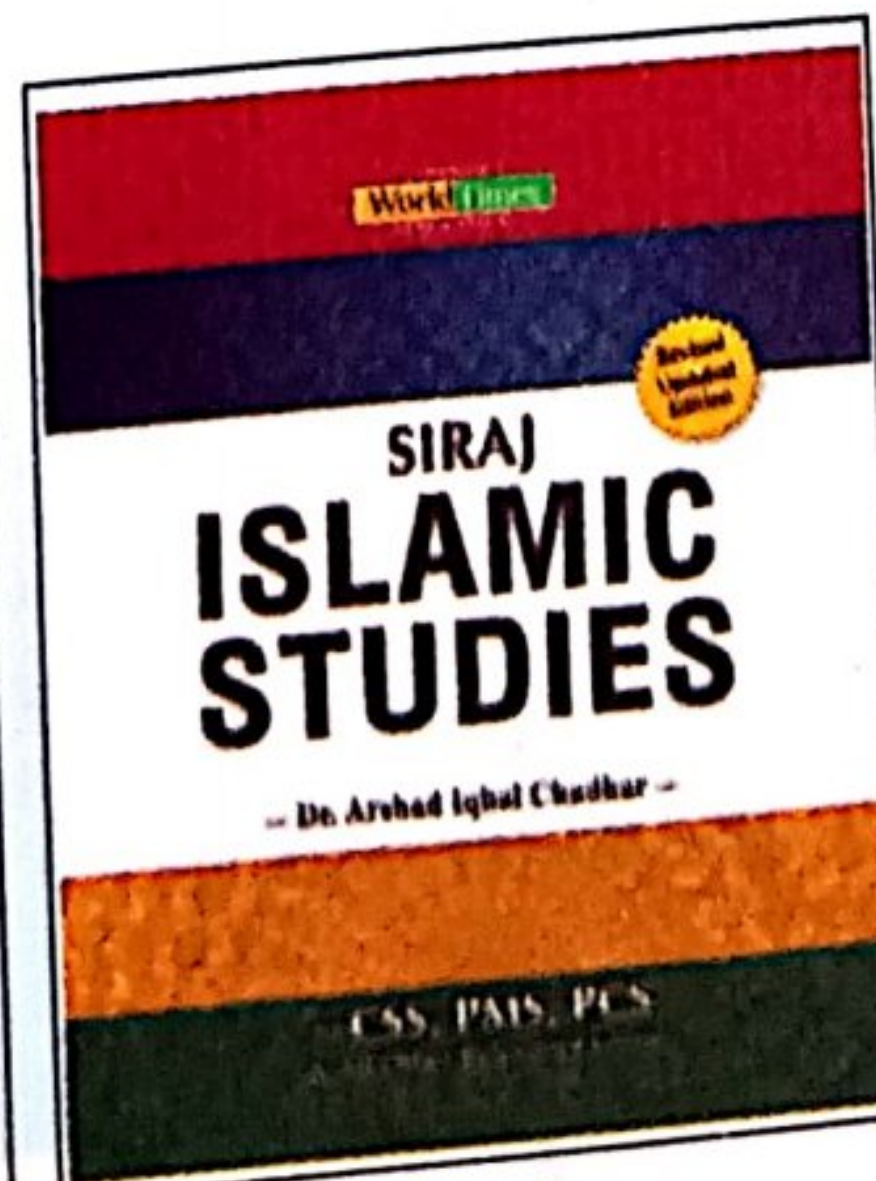
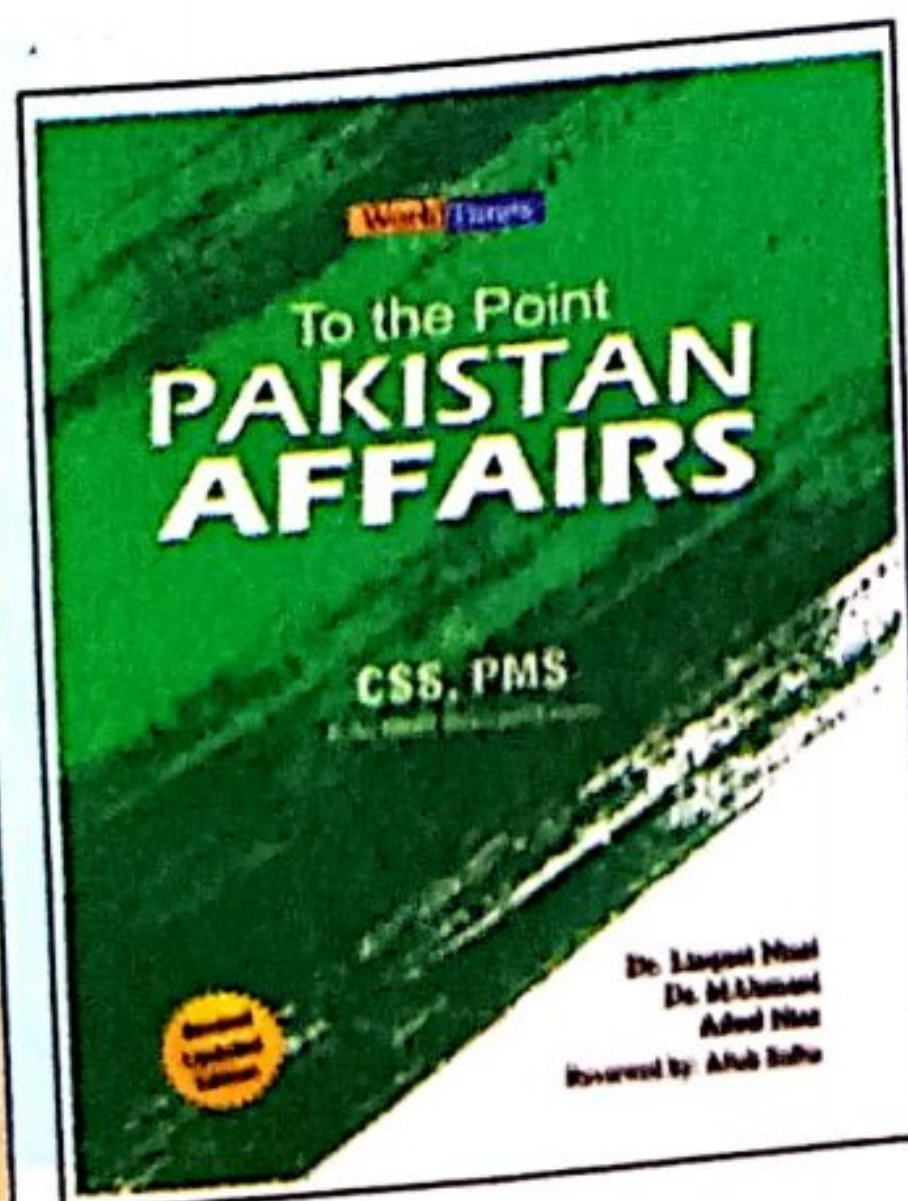
- (a) Imam Shafi
(b) Imam Abu Hanifa
(c) **Imam Malik**
(d) Imam Ahmad bin Hanbl

19. "Mujadid-Alf-Thani" is the title of:

- (a) Shah Wali Ullah
(b) Abdul Haq Muhadith Dehlvi
(c) **Sheikh Ahmad Sarhandi**
(d) Sheikh Mohayudin ibn Arabi

20. The Quranic term "Gharmin" means:

- (a) **An Indebted** (b) A Friend
(c) A Slave (d) A Neighbour



Optional Subjects (MCQs)

This is the first part of 'CSS 2024 Solved Papers'. The second part, consisting of solved MCQs of many other optional subjects, will be included in May 2024 issue, Insha Allah!

Test Prep Experts



Economics

1. There are strong theoretical reasons to expect that changes in wealth are responsible for changes in consumption. Nonetheless, one reason that we observe a tight link between consumption and disposable income is:

(a) *Credit rationing which changes the intertemporal budget constraint for borrowers.*

(b) Households attempt to smooth their consumption.

(c) Household saving provides a buffer between income and expenditure.

(d) Ricardian equivalence.

2. The accelerator principle states:

(a) *If an increase in the growth of output is expected, investment will increase.*

(b) If an increase in investment is expected, output will increase.

(c) If an increase in the growth of investment is expected, output will increase.

(d) Small swings in investment are associated with large swings of output.

3. The optimal capital stock is achieved when the user cost of capital is equal to:

(a) The interest rate

(b) The depreciation rate

(c) *The marginal product of capital*

(d) Tobin's q.

4. A supply side vicious circle of poverty suggests that poor nations remain poor because:

(a) Saving remains low

(b) Investment remains low

(c) There is a lack of effective government

(d) *Both (a) & (b)*

5. Which of the following is not

typically an element in the structural change that accompanies development?

(a) Increase in the share of agriculture in GDP (gross domestic product)

(b) Increase in manufacturing as a share of GDP

(c) Increase in urbanization

(d) *All of these*

6. The essence of Engel's law is that as family income rises:

(a) The savings rate increases

(b) *The proportion of income spent on food declines*

(c) Expenditure on food declines

(d) Proportion of income spent on luxuries declines

7. Economics growth measures the:

(a) *Growth of productivity*

(b) Increase in nominal income

(c) Increase in output

(d) None of these

8. Non-traded goods do not enter measured GDP because:

(a) They are intermediate goods

(b) *They are not traded in the market*

(c) There is no value added in the production of such goods

(d) Their value is not captured by the exchange rate method of conversion to a common unit

9. The concept of opportunity cost is based upon the principle of:

(a) Need

(b) Consumption

(c) *Scarcity*

(d) Profit

10. Which of the following is an INCORRECT statement about a budget constraint?

(a) Points on budget constraint represent combinations of the good that exactly use up income

(b) Points within the budget constraint represent combinations of the good that do not use up all the

income

(c) *If points A and B lie on the budget constraint, we can deduce that people will be indifferent between the two*

(d) If the price of one good decreases, all else the same, the budget constraint will swivel or rotate outward

11. When the manufacturer of power looms expands, there are forward linkage effects due to:

(a) Lost employment in the handloom sector

(b) Increased incomes of workers that manufacture looms

(c) *Increased output of woven cloth made by the power looms*

(d) Increased demand for electric motors

12. The Keynesian assumption is a convenient analytical short cut and turns out to be a rather accurate description of the reality. What does it assume?

(a) Constant prices

(b) Firms cannot reduce fixed costs

(c) Output is predetermined

(d) *The interest rate stimulates growth*

13. What is not a component of the GDP?

(a) Consumption goods

(b) Investment spending by firms on capital goods

(c) *Public sector's own demand for goods*

(d) Employment rate

14. In short-run macroeconomic analysis, demand is often viewed as the driving force. Which component of total demand is often regarded as being independent of economic conditions and thus exogenous in the model?

(a) *Consumption and private*

- spending
(b) Investment, saving
(c) Net exports
(d) Government spending and tax receipts

15. Which kind of demand fluctuates the most?

- (a) Consumption demand
(b) Private demand for investment
(c) **Aggregate Demand**
(d) Demand by firms for investment goods

16. It is the _____ interest rate that matters for spending decisions and the _____ interest rate that is relevant when we look at monetary questions.

- (a) Interbank, Exchange
(b) Exchange, Interbank
(c) **Real, Nominal** (d) Nominal, Real

17. A certain amount of goods and services in necessary for a minimum standard of living, This is called:

- (a) **Basic needs**
(b) Absolute poverty
(c) An international standard of living
(d) The concept of development

18. With perfect income equality the Gini coefficient in a country would be:

- (a) Infinity (b) 1
(c) 5 (d) 0

19. The aggregate production function for the Solow growth model assumes _____ returns to scale and _____ marginal productivity of labour and capital.

- (a) Increasing, Diminishing
(b) **Constant, Diminishing**
(c) Decreasing, Constant
(d) Constant, Creasing

20. The labour measure (L) is:

- (a) **The average number of workers employed x average hours worked**

- (b) The average number of workers (employed + unemployed) x average hours worked
(c) The total number of workers employed x average hours worked
(d) The total number of workers (employed + unemployed) x average hours worked

Paper II

1. Core inflation measures:

- (a) **CPI based inflation**
(b) GDP Deflator inflation
(c) WPI inflation (d) None of these

2. During FY 2022-23, Pakistan's industrial sector growth rate is:

- (a) 6.5% (b) **-2.94%**
(c) -10% (d) None of these

3. The CPI inflation for FY 2022-23 is:

- (a) 20% (b) 45%
(c) **29.3%** (d) None of these

4. Goal 1 of Sustainable Developments Goals relates to:

- (a) Hunger (b) Economic growth
(c) Education (d) **None of these**

5. Okun's Law defines the relationship between:

- (a) Unemployment and Inflation
(b) Inflation and Economic growth
(c) **Unemployment and GDP growth**
(d) None of these

6. Exchange rate depreciation improves:

- (a) Economy (b) Markets
(c) **Trade balance** (d) None of these

7. GDP measures "all goods and services _____ produced in a given year".

- (a) Domestically (b) **Nationally**
(c) Excluding exports and imports
(d) None of these

8. The monetary policy tools are used for:

- (a) Price stability
(b) Financial stability

(c) Economic growth

(d) **All of these**

9. Pakistan sought "International Monetary Fund's Financial Assistance" _____ times in 75 years.

- (a) 25 (b) **23**
(c) 12 (d) None of these

10. Financial Inclusions mean:

- (a) Having a financial account
(b) Using the financial products
(c) Having and using mobile accounts
(d) **All of these**

11. Quantity theory of money states that when quantity of money increases, value of money:

- (a) **Increases** (b) Declines
(c) Remains same (d) None of these

12. Fiscal and monetary policies are used to:

- (a) Improve markets
(b) **Stabilize economy**
(c) Improve trade deficit
(d) None of these

13. According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) redefined Act 2022, the primary function of SBP is:

- (a) Price stability
(b) **Treasury management**
(c) Exchange rate stability
(d) None of these

14. Gini coefficient is the measure of:

- (a) Poverty (b) **Inequality**
(c) Development (d) All of these

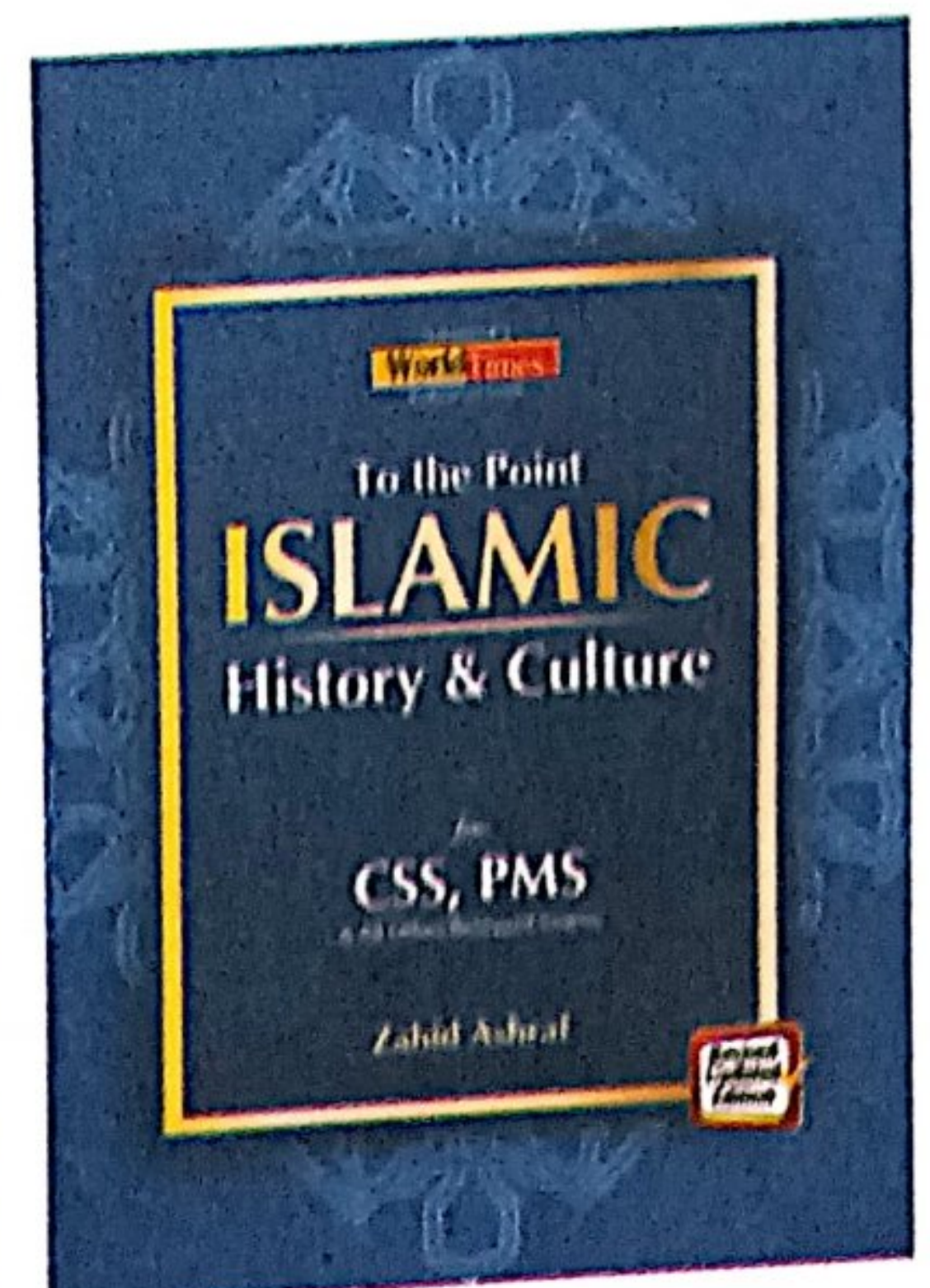
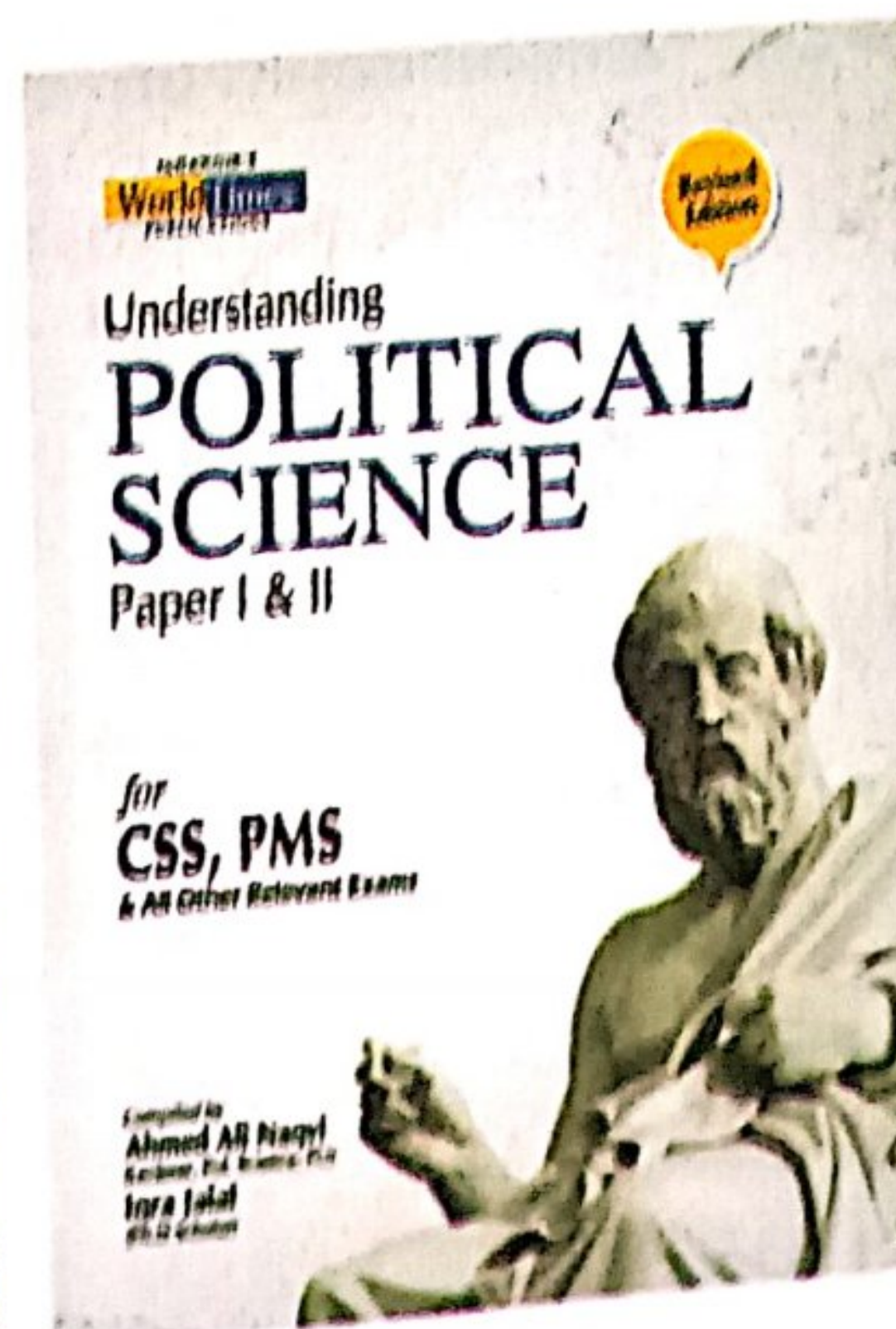
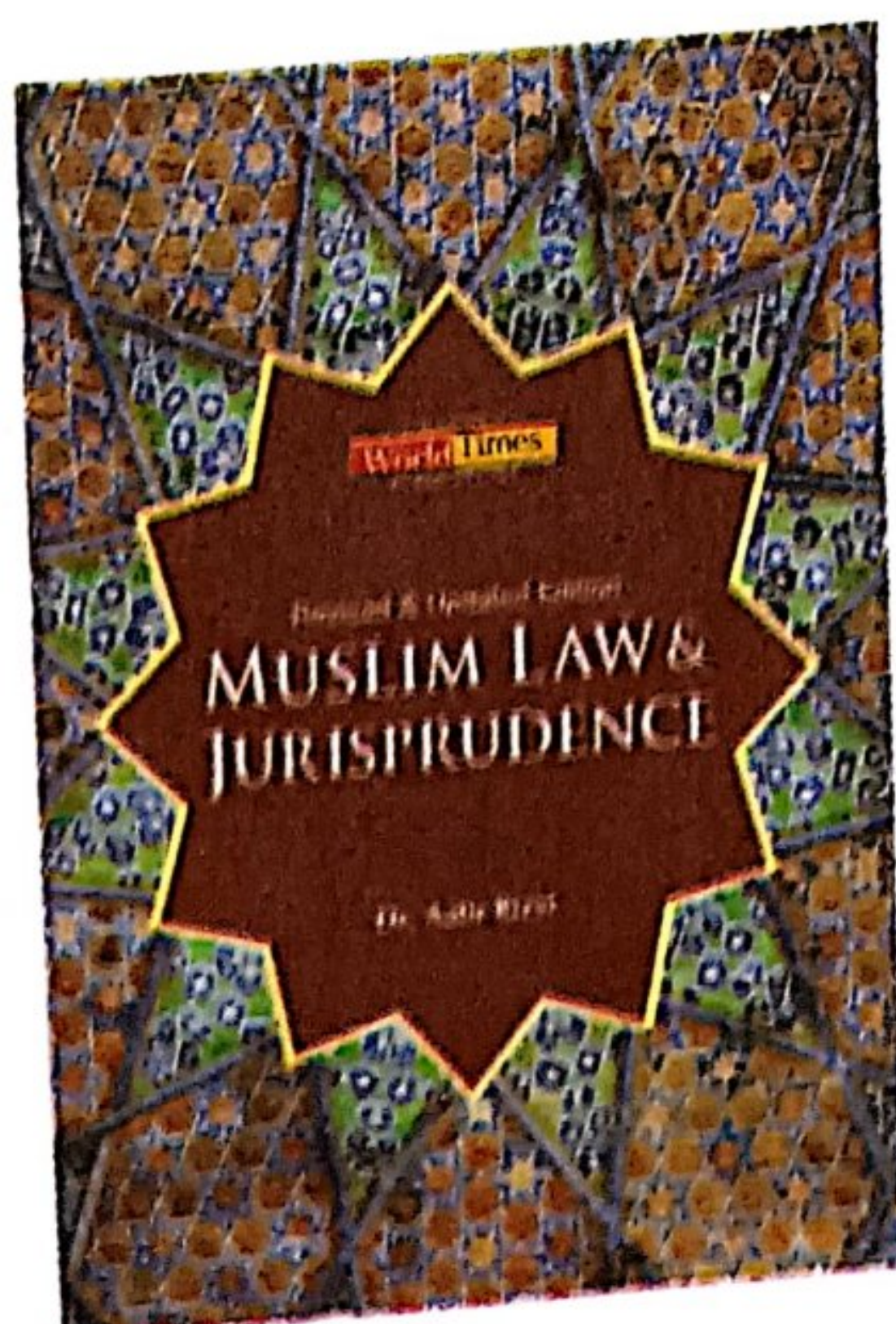
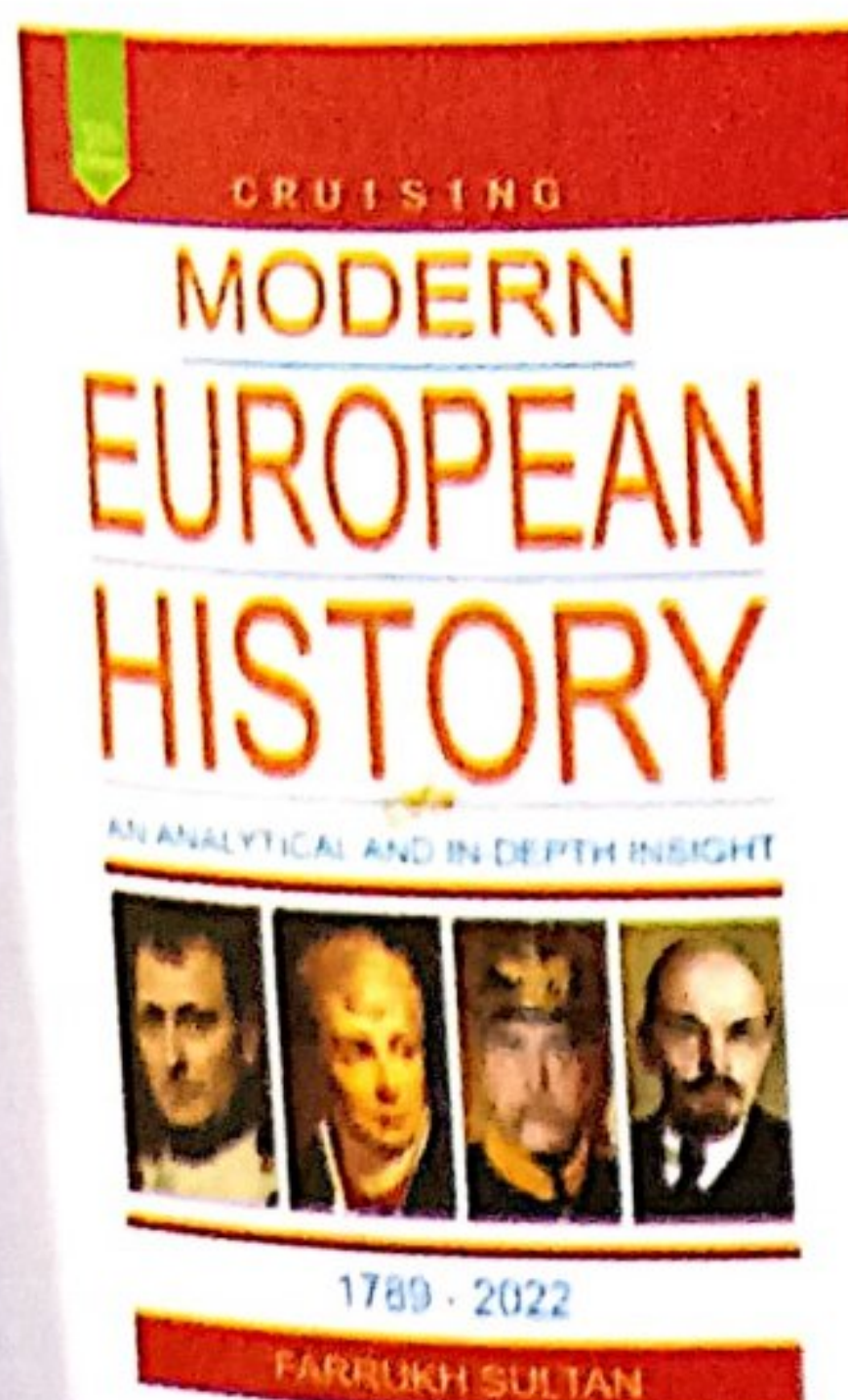
15. GNP measures:

- (a) **Total production of nation**
(b) Total income of a nation
(c) Total wealth of a nation
(d) Both (a) and (b)

16. Economic development is measured by:

- (a) Sustenance (b) Freedom
(c) Self-esteem (d) **All of these**

17. Unemployment rate is relatively higher in _____ in Pakistan as per Labour Force Survey 2020-21.



- (a) Young Adults (b) Youth
(c) Middle aged (d) None of these
18. Pakistan's first digital population census was conducted in the year:

(a) 2000 (b) 2009
(c) 2023 (d) None of these

18. In Pakistan, investment as percentage of GDP is lower than:

(a) India (b) China
(c) Bangladesh (d) All of these

20. Economic recession is defined as reduced economic activities and employment levels for at least:

(a) Two consecutive quarters
(b) One year

(c) 5 years
(d) None of these

Political Science

1. "Man by nature is a social and political animal" is the basis of the philosophy of:

(a) Plato (b) Aristotle
(c) Socrates (d) None of these

2. 'Leviathan' is the work of:

(a) Hegel (b) James Mill
(c) Hobbes (d) None of these

3. Rousseau's political philosophy furnished basis for:

(a) Popular sovereignty
(b) Absolute sovereignty
(c) Political sovereignty
(d) None of these

4. How many essentials are required to constitute a state?

(a) Three (b) Four
(c) Five (d) None of these

5. Laissez Faire policy means:

(a) Withdrawal of some restrictions
(b) Control over trade
(c) Control over industry
(d) None of these

6. Materialistic interpretation of history was propounded by:

(a) Trotsky (b) Lenin
(c) Bolsheviks (d) None of these

7. Importance of civil service has grown due to:

(a) Population growth
(b) Increased state activity
(c) Complexity of rules and regulations
(d) None of these

8. Those who are active against the very existence of state are known as:

(a) Anarchists (b) Socialists
(c) Terrorists (d) None of these

9. In Plato's Ideal State, one reaches at the pinnacle of the State order at the age of:

(a) 40 (b) 15
(c) 50 (d) None of these

10. The system of Basic

Democracies was introduced by:

(a) Gen. Yahya Khan
(b) Gen. Zia-ul-Haq
(c) Z. A. Bhutto
(d) None of these

11. "Political Science begins and ends with the state" is the statement of:

(a) Joseph Laski
(b) Stephen Leacock
(c) Professor Garner
(d) None of these

12. Constitution classified as rigid and flexible in a book titled 'Studies in History and Jurisprudence' was authored by:

(a) Gilchrist (b) James Bryce
(c) T. H. Green (d) None of these

13. The term Propaganda acquired a derogatory sense:

(a) During World War I
(b) During World War II
(c) During the Cold War
(d) None of these

14. Ahyul Ulum is the work of:

(a) Al Ghazali
(b) Al Mawardi
(c) Al Farabi
(d) None of these

15. The Bolshevik movement in Russia was led by:

(a) Stalin
(b) Lenin
(c) Trotsky
(d) None of these

16. He is known as the major theorist of bureaucracy:

(a) Rene Descartes
(b) Robert Dahl
(c) Max Weber
(d) None of these

17. Decentralization is a feature of:

(a) Federal system
(b) Autocratic system
(c) Unitary system
(d) None of these

18. Separation of Ethics and Politics was the principal notion in the philosophy of:

(a) Lenin (b) Marx
(c) Machiavelli (d) None of these

19. A Bi-cameral legislature is mostly suited to:

(a) Unitary States
(b) Federal States
(c) Theocratic states
(d) None of these

20. The principle of Judicial Review means to:

(a) Interpret a law
(b) Rewrite a law
(c) Restore a law
(d) None of these

Paper II

1. Which of the following is NOT a description of the American system of government?

(a) Federal Republic
(b) Constitutional Republic
(c) A Presidential State
(d) None of these

2. Germany is classified as being:

(a) Federal Parliamentary Democracy
(b) A Constitutional Monarchy
(c) A Presidential State
(d) None of these

3. Germany has a lower house of Parliament known as:

(a) Bundesrat
(b) Bundestag

(c) Reichstag
(d) None of these

4. France is classified as being:

(a) A Semi-Presidential System
(b) A Presidential System
(c) A Constitutional Monarchy
(d) None of these

5. In the French political system Executive Power is exercised by:

(a) Parliament (b) Presidency
(c) Senate (d) None of these

6. Which of the following is NOT a member of the United Kingdom?

(a) Wales (b) Scotland
(c) Ireland (d) None of these

7. In the United Kingdom the Monarch is classified as being:

(a) The Head of State
(b) The Head of Government
(c) The Head of the Protestant Church
(d) None of these

8. The International Monetary Fund has a series of economic recommendations for states which are referred to as:

(a) Structural Adjustments
(b) Structural Modifiers
(c) Structural Realignments
(d) None of these

9. Which of the following states are NOT members of the International Monetary Fund?

(a) Turkey
(b) Nepal
(c) Argentina
(d) None of these

10. Which country is the highest financially indebted state to the International Monetary Fund?

(a) Cyprus
(b) Pakistan
(c) Russia
(d) None of these

11. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is:

(a) An alternative donor institution to

the World Bank

- (b) A Commercial Bank
(c) A private Investment House
(d) None of these

12. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is primarily involved in:

- (a) Providing loans for infrastructure development projects
(b) Providing loans for member states involved in infrastructure development projects associated with the Belt & Road
(c) Providing monetary assistance to any state regardless of institutional membership
(d) None of these

13. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank currently has:

- (a) 111 member states
(b) 110 member states
(c) 109 member states
(d) None of these

14. The World Trade Organization is a successor organization to:

- (a) General Agreement on Trade
(b) General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
(c) Mercosur
(d) None of these

15. The European Union is a successor organization to:

- (a) European Economic Community
(b) European Economic & Political Community
(c) European Coal & Steel Community
(d) None of these

16. The European Union is legally incorporated through which of the following?

- (a) Treaty of Rome
(b) Treaty of Paris
(c) Maastricht Treaty
(d) None of these

17. The European Commission serves as:

- (a) An advisory body to the European Council of Ministers
(b) A legislative body for the European Union
(c) An executive body of the European Union
(d) None of these

(b) A legislative body for the European Union

(c) An executive body of the European Union

(d) None of these

18. Which of the following is an issue that is part of the agenda being pursued by institutions classified as being part of the Global Civil Society?

- (a) Minority Rights
(b) Tariff rates in the energy sector
(c) Oil extraction rate in the Middle East
(d) None of these

19. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is classified as being:

- (a) A Political-Security Community
(b) An Economic Community
(c) A Socio-Cultural Community
(d) None of these

20. The current global system of trade is underpinned with which ideological ethos?

- (a) Liberalism
(b) Neo-Liberalism
(c) Libertarianism
(d) None of these

International Relations

1. Treaty of Westphalia was signed in:

- (a) 1748
(b) 1648
(c) 1548
(d) None of these

2. Book 'No Exit from Pakistan' was written by:

- (a) Crispin Bates
(b) Michael Kugelman
(c) Daniel Markey
(d) None of these

3. World's biggest iceberg is:

- (a) A23a
(b) B23b
(c) C23c
(d) None of these

4. Congress of Vienna took place in:

- (a) 1815
(b) 1816
(c) 1817
(d) None of these

5. 14 Points were given by:

- (a) Markus Daechsel
(b) Woodrow Wilson
(c) Harry Truman

(d) None of these

6. Cuban Missile Crisis took place during:

- (a) 1960
(b) 1961
(c) 1962
(d) None of these

7. HAMAS was founded in:

- (a) 1985
(b) 1986
(c) 1987
(d) None of these

8. Suez Canal was officially opened in:

(a) November 1869

(b) November 1970

(c) November 1971

(d) None of these

9. Name of the Israeli parliament is:

(a) Knesset

(b) Parliman

(c) People's Assembly

(d) None of these

10. The Peloponnesian Wars were fought between:

(a) Athens & Sparta

(b) Athens & Persian Empire

(c) Athens & Roman Empire

(d) None of these

11. Morgenthau says "Balance of Power" occurs by:

(a) Naturally

(b) Prudent Statesmen

(c) Hostile Country

(d) None of these

12. Defensive & Offensive Realism theories are given by:

(a) Morgenthau

(b) Norman Angell

(c) John Mearsheimer

(d) None of these

13. Theory of Postmodernism was given by:

(a) Alexander Wendt

(b) E.H. Carr

(c) Michel Foucault

(d) None of these

14. The 'Art of War' book was written by:

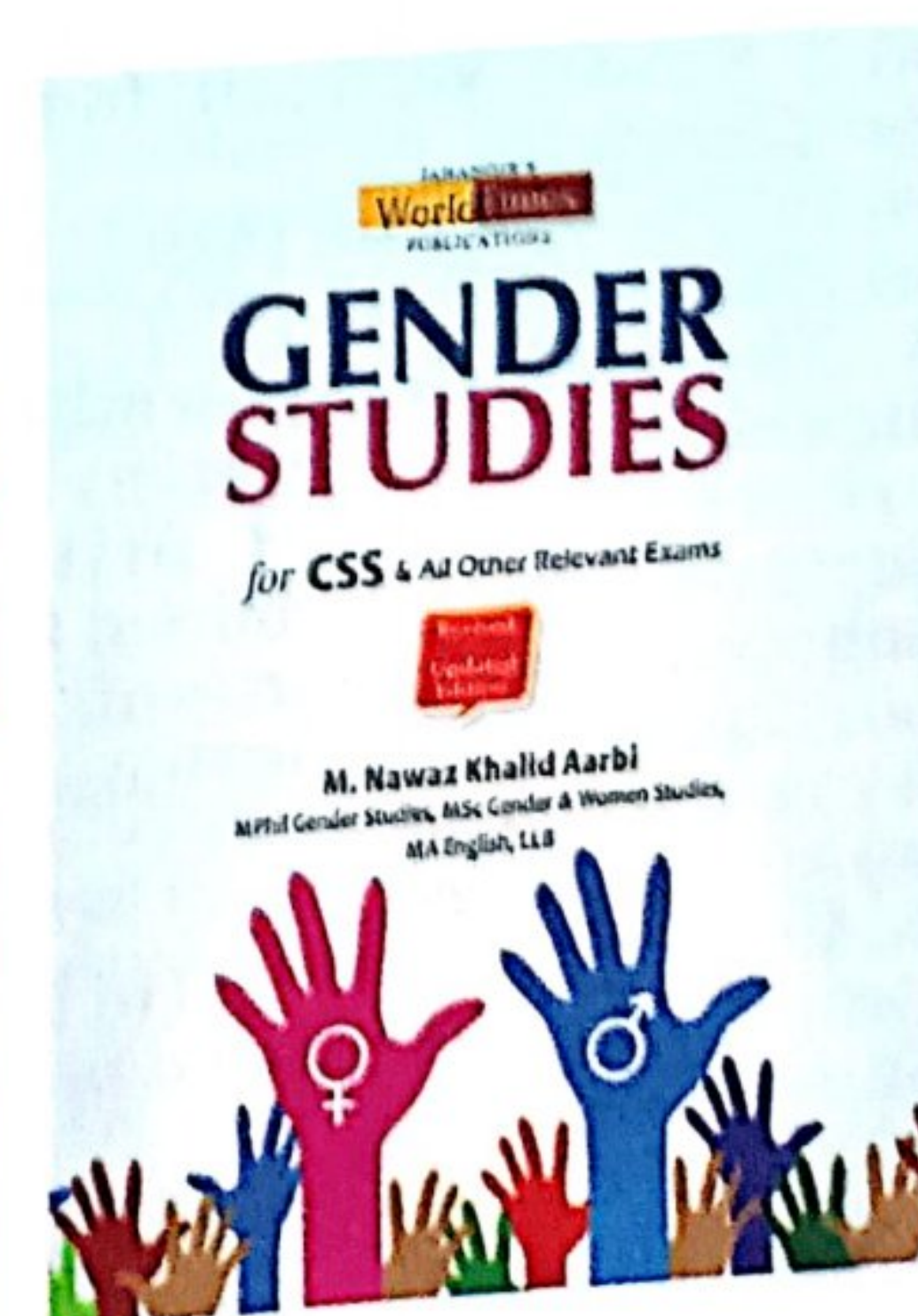
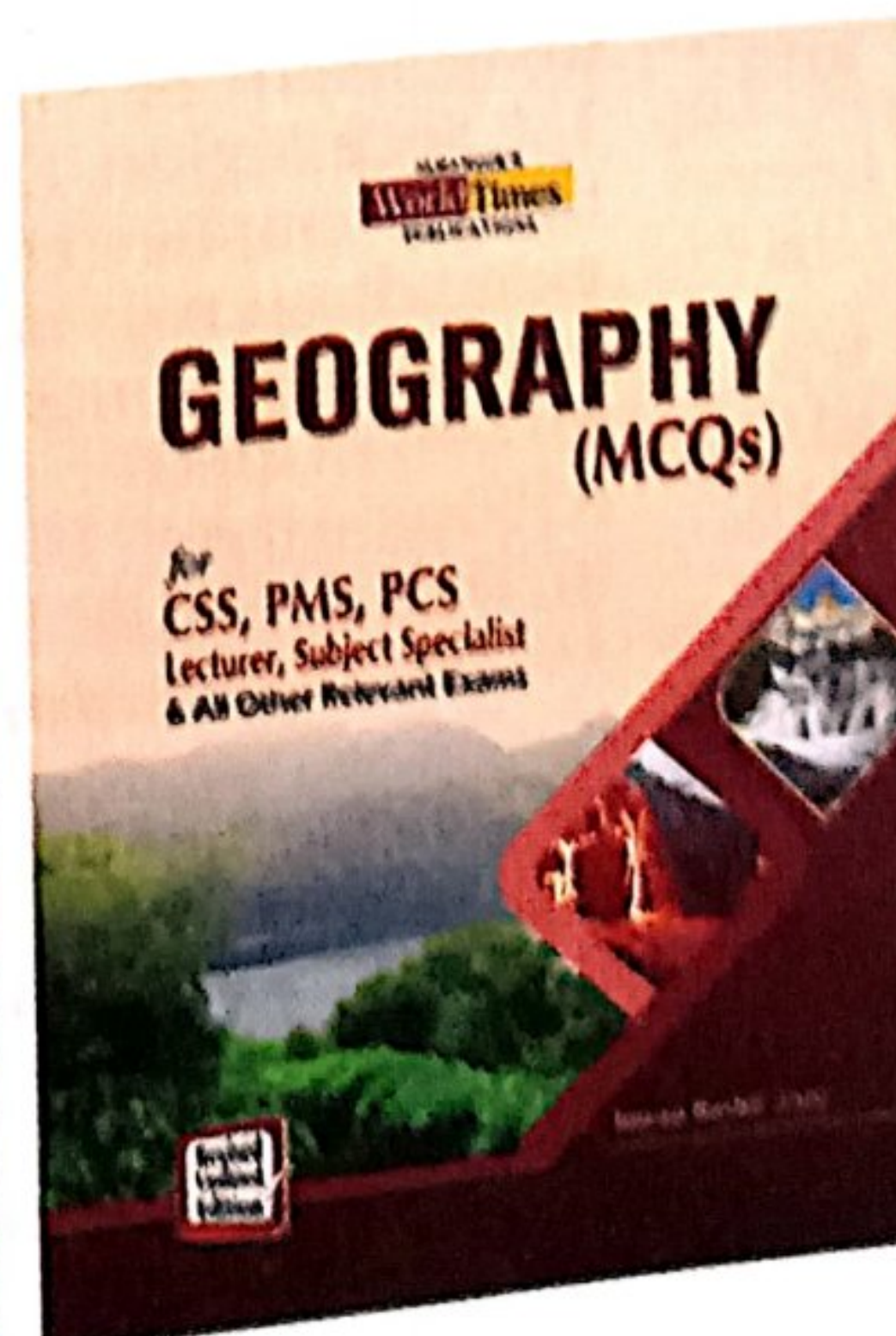
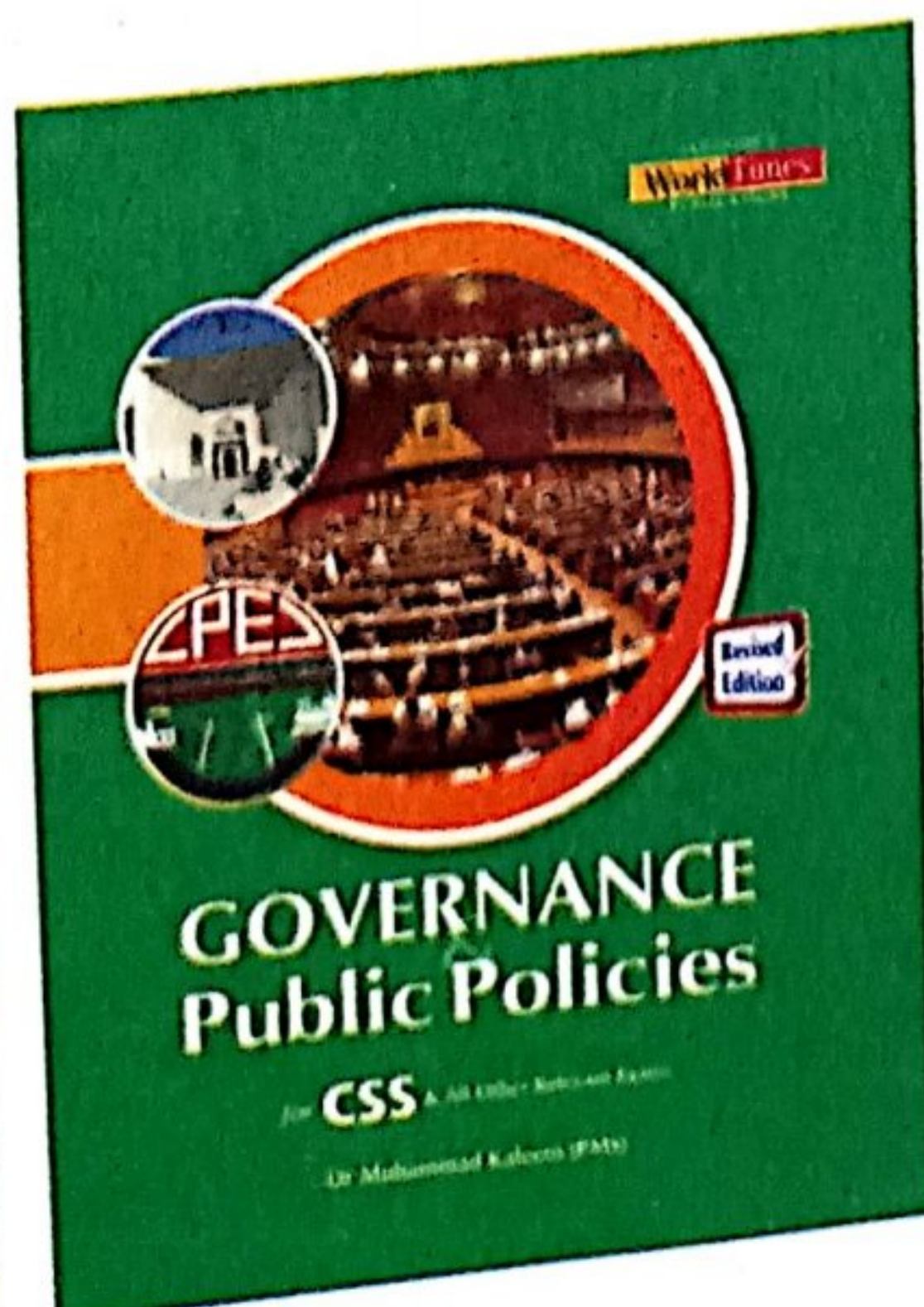
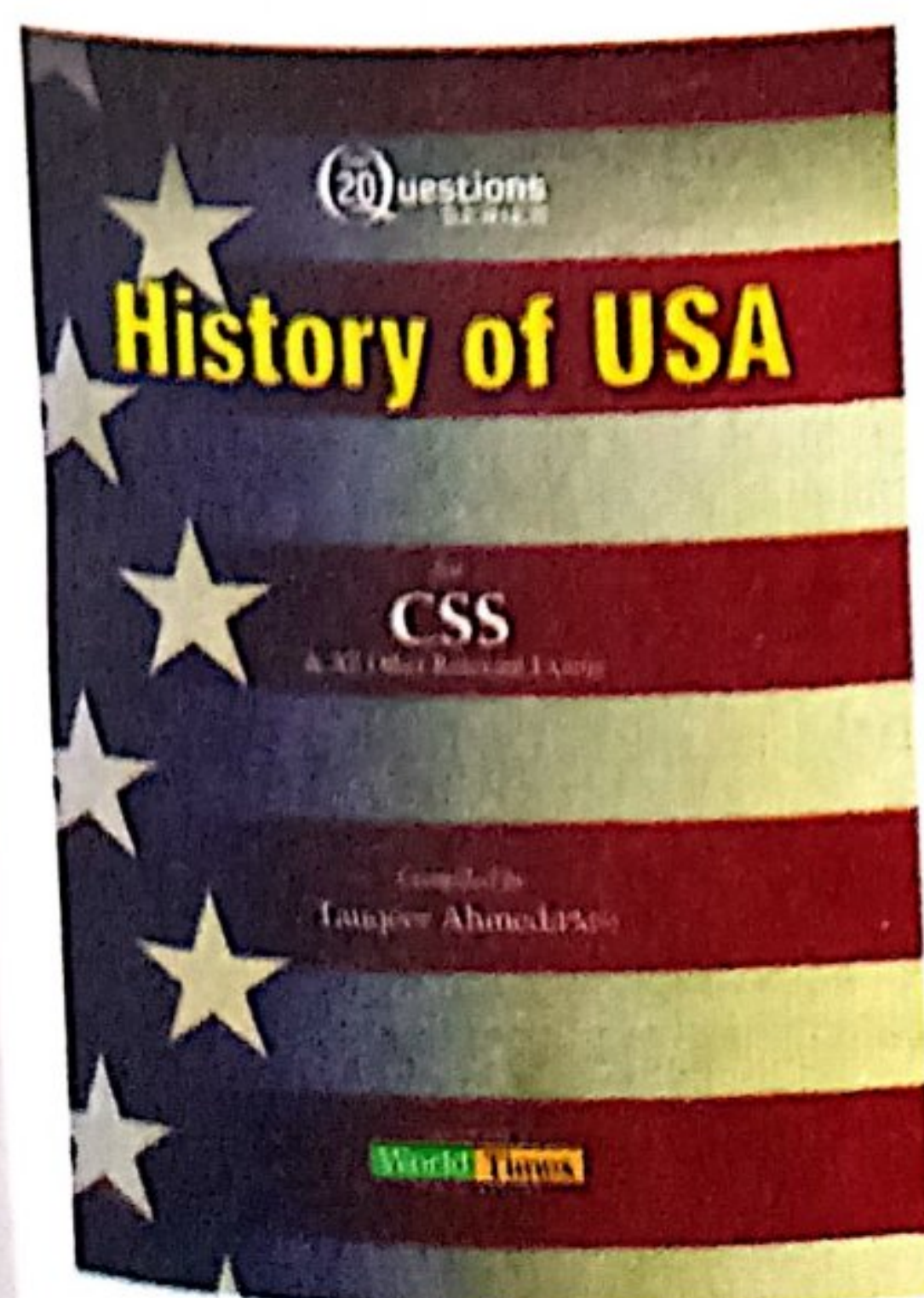
(a) Sun Tzu

(b) Quang Chong

(c) Cho-yeong

(d) None of these

15. NSG stands for:



- (a) Nuclear Support Group
(b) Nuclear Strategic Grounds
(c) **Nuclear Suppliers Group**
(d) None of these
16. British government sold Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh in:
(a) 1845 (b) **1846**
(c) 1847 (d) None of these
17. Foreign Minister of Iran is:
(a) **Hossein Amir-Abdollahian**
(b) Reza Amiri-Moghaddam
(c) Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf
(d) None of these
18. CWC stands for:
(a) **Chemical Weapons Convention**
(b) Charter of Women Convention
(c) Children Welfare Convention
(d) None of these
19. IDF stands for:
(a) International Defence Forces
(b) **Israel Defence Forces**
(c) Iran Defense Forces
(d) None of these
20. World's top scorer of football 2023 is:
(a) Kylian Mbappe
(b) **Cristiano Ronaldo**
(c) Lionel Messi
(d) None of these

Paper II

1. Economic spill-over from one sector to other sectors is explained by:
(a) Robert D. Gilpin (b) **Frost B. Haas**
(c) Robert D. Kaplan
(d) None of these
2. Proposal for joint defence between Pakistan and India was given by:
(a) Chou En-Lai (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
(c) **Ayub Khan** (d) None of these
3. Who is author of the book "When China Rules the World"?
(a) Graham Allison
(b) **Martin Jacques**
(c) Thomas Friedman
(d) Fareed Zakariya
4. The Ganges Water-Sharing treaty was signed between India and Bangladesh in:
(a) 1992 (b) 1889
(c) 1982 (d) **1996**
5. The Munich Agreement was signed among Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain in September 1938 permitted German annexation of territories of:
(a) Poland (b) Hungary
(c) **Czechoslovakia**
(d) Alsace-Lorraine
6. Author of "The Origin of Political Order: From Prehuman times to the French Revolution" is:

- (a) Samuel P. Huntington
(b) **Francis Fukuyama**
(c) Kenneth Waltz
(d) Jessica Tushman Mathews
7. The Concert of Europe was founded in:
(a) 1882 (b) **1815**
(c) 1648 (d) 1789
8. The Six-Day War was fought between Israel and Arab States in:
(a) 1956 (b) 1982
(c) **1967** (d) 1973
9. The book "On China" is written by:
(a) Sun Tzu (b) Xi Jinping
(c) Robert D. Kaplan
(d) **Henry Kissinger**
10. Who coined the phrase "Global Village"?
(a) George Marshall
(b) John Locke
(c) **Marshall McLuhan**
(d) John Foster Dulles
11. Robert S. McNamara is famous for:
(a) The Suez Canal Crisis
(b) **The Vietnam War**
(c) The Iran-Iraq War
(d) The American war on terror
12. Who proposed the "Heartland Theory"?
(a) **Halford John Mackinder**
(b) Alfred T. Mahan
(c) Christopher Columbus
(d) Nicholas J. Spykman
13. According to Machiavelli, the two essential means for conduct of foreign policy are:
(a) Lion and Wolf
(b) Cheetah and Fox
(c) **Lion and Fox**
(d) Leopard and Wolf
14. _____ proposed a fourteen-point program under his vision of making the world 'safe for democracy'.
(a) Francis Fukuyama
(b) Barack Obama
(c) **Woodrow Wilson**
(d) Winston Churchill
15. Sociological Liberalism argued by _____ emphasizes the impact of expanding cross-border activities.
(a) **Robert Keohane**
(b) Karl Deutsch
(c) Joseph Nye
(d) Michael Doyle
16. _____ proposed a 'cobweb model' of transitional relationships
(a) **John Burton** (b) Joseph Nye
(c) Immanuel Kant (d) Oram Young
17. The statement that 'political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that

govern the universe' has been given by:

- (a) Thomas Hobbes (b) E. H. Carr
(c) **Morgenthau**
(d) Kenneth Waltz
18. The statement that 'There can be no other conceivable basis under capitalism for the division of general economic, financial, military strength, etc.' was given by:
(a) Karl Marx (b) Friedrich Engels
(c) Joseph Stalin (d) **Lenin**
19. The social world including international relations is human construction' is the key idea argued by:
(a) Liberalism (b) **Constructivism**
(c) IPE (d) Feminism
20. The book "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the wealth of Nations" written by:
(a) Thomas J. Friedman
(b) **Adam Smith**
(c) John Maynard Keynes
(d) None of these

Business Administration

1. Maryland Industries acquired a machine 2 years ago with an installed cost of \$100,000. The asset was being depreciated using MACRS at 20% and 32% in year 1 and year 2 respectively. What will be the book value of the machine at the end of two years?
(a) \$52,000 (b) **\$54,400**
(c) \$48,000 (d) None of these
2. The portion of an asset's sale price that is above its book value and below its initial purchase price is called:
(a) Accumulated depreciation
(b) **Recaptured depreciation**
(c) Salvage values (d) None of these
3. The main purpose of Financial Accounting is to:
(a) **Provide financial information to shareholders**
(b) Maintain balance sheet
(c) Minimize taxes (d) None of these
4. Financial accounting reports lay greater emphasis on the;
(a) **Objectivity of data**
(b) Flexibility of data
(c) Relevancy of data
(d) None of these
5. What does financial leverage measure? (EBIT: Earnings before interest and taxes, EPS: Earnings per share).
(a) No change with EBIT and EPS
(b) The sensitivity of EBIT with percent change w.r.t. output
(c) The sensitivity of EPS w.r.t. percent change in the EBIT level

- (d) None of these
6. One major difference between PERT (project evaluation and review technique) and CPM (critical path method) is that:
- (a) PERT employs 3 time estimates and CPM employs 4 time estimates
(b) PERT employs 3 time estimates and CPM employs only 1 time estimate
 (c) PERT employs 1 time estimate and CPM employs 3 time estimates
 (d) None of these
7. The length of time an activity can be delayed without delaying the entire project is called:
- (a) Optimistic time
 (b) Pessimistic time
(c) Slack time
 (d) None of these
8. Which one of the following is not a time-series forecasting method?
- (a) Moving averages
 (b) Exponential smoothing
(c) Trend projections
 (d) None of these
9. According to the classification of three process regions in a process-chain-network (PCN), the example of sandwich preparation at Subway restaurant is:
- (a) Direct interaction
 (b) Surrogate interaction
(c) Independent processing
 (d) None of these
10. The three elements of Triple Bottom Line for sustainability are:
- (a) People, product, profits
(b) People, planet, profits
 (c) People, process, product
 (d) None of these
11. The customers of Tony & Guy Salon have noticed that the quality of a haircut depends on who provides it as well as when, where, and how the service is provided. Which of the following characteristic of the service is evident in this instance?
- (a) Service intangibility
 (b) Service inseparability
(c) Service variability
 (d) None of these
12. At a presentation in class, Aliya was not confident that she would be able to speak well. However, her confidence was increased when her friend, who she thought to have same communication skills as she did, performed brilliantly. She told herself; "Well, if she can do it, I can do it as well". This increase in her confidence is due to:
- (a) Enactive mastery**
 (b) Vicarious modelling
 (c) Verbal persuasion

- (d) None of these
13. Which of the following is NOT an accurate description of modern marketing?
- (a) Marketing is the creation of value for customers
 (b) Marketing involves managing profitable customer relationships
(c) Marketing emphasizes selling and advertising exclusively
 (d) None of these
14. Which of the following product mix pricing strategies involves pricing products that must or can only be used with the main product?
- (a) By-product pricing
(b) Captive product pricing
 (c) Product line pricing
 (d) None of these
15. Which of the following is an example of a convenience product?
- (a) Fast food** (b) Diamond ring
 (c) Furniture (d) None of these
16. Which of the following brands most likely require heavy advertising in order to be set apart from similar products?
- (a) Undifferentiated brands**
 (b) Specialty brands
 (c) International brands
 (d) None of these
17. According to the Leadership Grid, a leadership style which is high in people orientation and low in task orientation is termed as:
- (a) Transactional leader**
 (b) Transformational leader
 (c) Country club management
 (d) None of these
18. The fundamental principle of the application of Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) techniques to investment appraisal is:
- (a) To incorporate all incremental cash flow**
 (c) To incorporate all relevant depreciation
 (d) To absorb all company overheads
 (d) None of these
19. One of the disadvantages of a functional structure is:
- (a) Replication of activities**
 (b) Cost effectiveness
(c) Myopia (d) None of these
20. Theory Y suggests that workers:
- (a) Are not willing to accept responsibility
 (b) Cannot work without supervision
(c) Can exercise self-direction
 (d) None of these

Public Administration

1. With respect to one of the definitions, public administration

- as a field is mainly concerned with the means for:
- (a) Implementing Political Values
 (b) Maintaining Cultural Values
 (c) Promoting bureaucratic governance
(d) None of these
2. 'New Public Management' (NPM) is a variant of public administration's:
- (a) Political Approach
(b) Managerial Approach
 (c) Legal Approach
 (d) None of these
3. Main structural elements of Max Weber's concept of bureaucracy include:
- (a) Hierarchy of authority
 (b) Career structure through specializations
 (c) Both (a) & (b)
(d) None of these
4. Stephen Robbins has organized the leadership studies into:
- (a) Trait, behavioral and political theories**
 (b) Trait, behavioral and contingency theories
 (c) Scientific management/need theories
 (d) None of these
5. Maslow's theory of human motivation, based on hierarchy of needs, also includes:
- (a) Self-actualization
 (b) Self-esteem
(c) Both (a) & (b)
 (d) None of these
6. In pluralistic public administration, the organizational structures are highly representative of the competing:
- (a) Bureaucratic and law enforcing groups
(b) Political, social and economic groups
 (c) Civil servants and police groups
 (d) None of these
7. Recent literature on public administration in South Asian perspective highlights that main reason of rampant corruption in public offices of developing countries include:
- (a) Cultural and social phenomenon**
 (b) Work-life balance issues of employees
(c) Low salaries compared to private sector
 (d) None of these
8. In South Asian context, administrative reforms concerning administrative structures and procedures are undertaken to improve governance under the

needs of:

- (a) Keeping in step with globalization
- (b) Moving towards privatization and deregulation

(c) *Both (a) & (b)*

(d) None of these

9. The 'Civil Service' structure, considered as backbone of public administrative of Pakistan has been derived from:

- (a) British India Corporate Services
- (b) All India Muslims Civil Service

(c) *Indian Civil Service*

(d) None of these

10. In 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, the legislative lists dealing with all federation issues included:

(a) *Federal Constitutional List*

(b) Provincial development plans' List

(c) Local Government List

(d) None of these

11. As per constitutional provisions, appointment and removal of provincial governors in Pakistan rests with the:

(a) Provincial Governments

(b) *Federal Government*

(c) As per decision of Senate

(d) None of these

12. The managerial approach to public administration promotes the organizations, essentially along the lines of:

(a) Adam Smith's Productive Labor

(b) *Frederick W. Taylor's Scientific Management*

(c) Max Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy

(d) None of these

13. The rationale for public administration to be an academic discipline and professional specialty was initially given by:

(a) Karl Heinrich Marx

(b) *Woodrow Wilson*

(c) Alfred Marshall

(d) None of these

14. The theory that highlights formal and informal governance structures within societies and examines individual's social processes is called:

(a) *Institutional Theory of Governance*

(b) Transitional Administration

(c) Contingency Administration

(d) None of these

15. Performance appraisals and periodic reports on the output of individuals and departments are part of the:

(a) *Performance Management System*

(b) Rewards awarding mechanisms

(c) Promotion and upgradation System

(d) None of these

16. Under the Civil Servants Rules of 1973; appointments promotions and transfers of civil servants in Pakistan are based on:

(a) Education and qualifications

(b) Performance and annual reports

(c) *Combination of merit and seniority*

(d) None of these

17. Rational choice theory is based on the assumption that the person making a decision or taking an action will do so on the basis of his/her:

(a) *Assessment of personal needs*

(b) Assessment of community needs

(c) Assessment of family needs

(d) None of these

18. Monetary policy involving use of different financial instruments to influence interest rates and money supply is prepared and implemented by:

(a) State-owned stock exchanges

(b) Consortium of commercial banks

(c) *Central or state bank of the country*

(d) None of these

19. An organization's efficiency and effectiveness can be improved through the application of administrative principles falling under:

(a) Administrative management theory

(b) *Bureaucratic management theory*

(c) Scalar chain theory

(d) None of these

20. Public-private partnership is a contractual arrangement between government and private sectors for the delivery of:

(a) Private services funded by public sector

(b) Public services financed by private sector

(c) *Both (a) & (b)*

(d) None of these

Governance & Public Policies

1. Woodrow Wilson argued that the work of government agencies would be accomplished more effectively by:

(a) *Adopting the business principles of the private sector*

(b) Combining administration and politics

(c) Rejecting the business model

(d) Decentralizing administrative authority

2. Three key pillars of the state are:

(a) *Judiciary, legislature, executive*

(b) Judiciary, media, legislature

(c) Judiciary, media, executive

(d) All of these

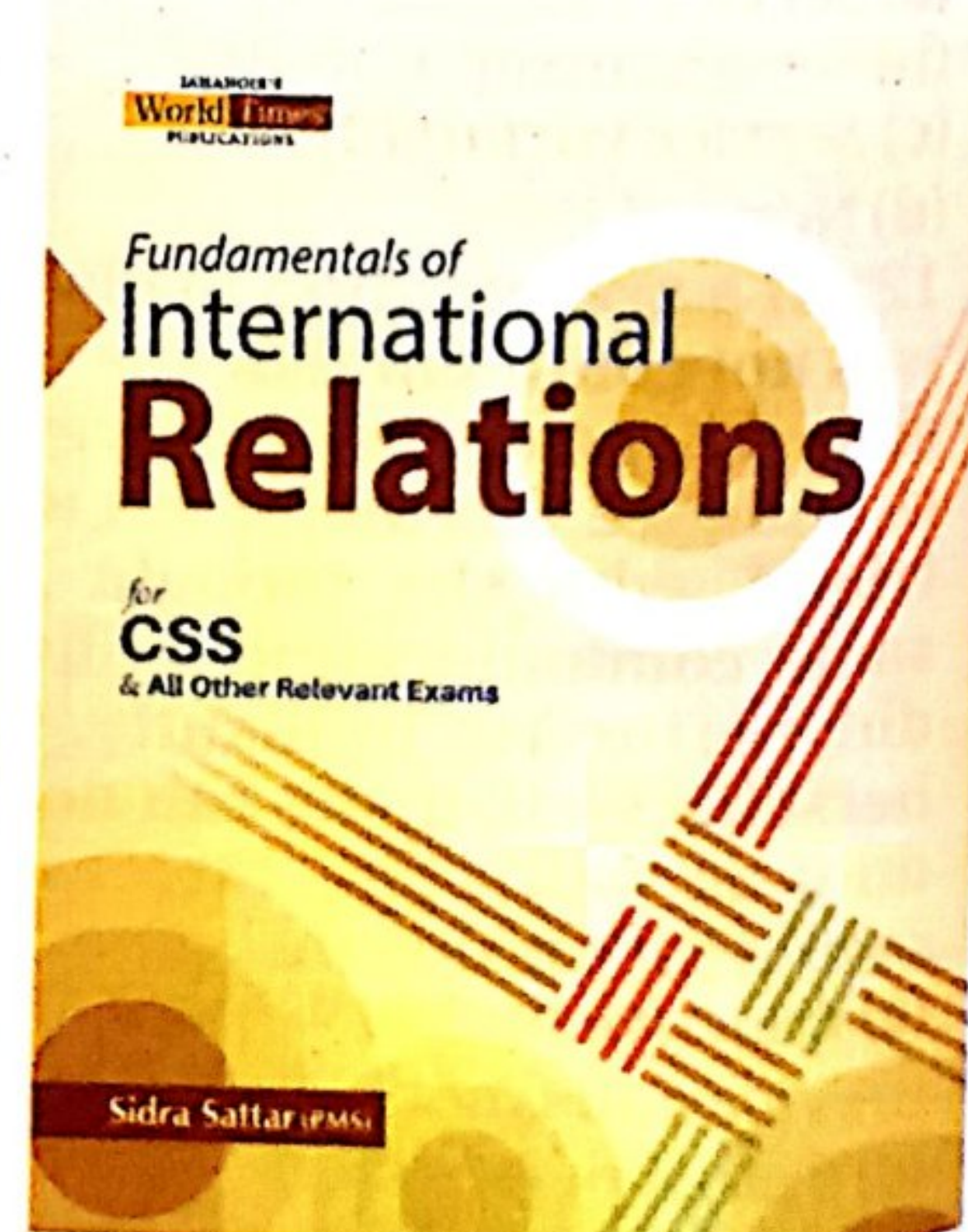
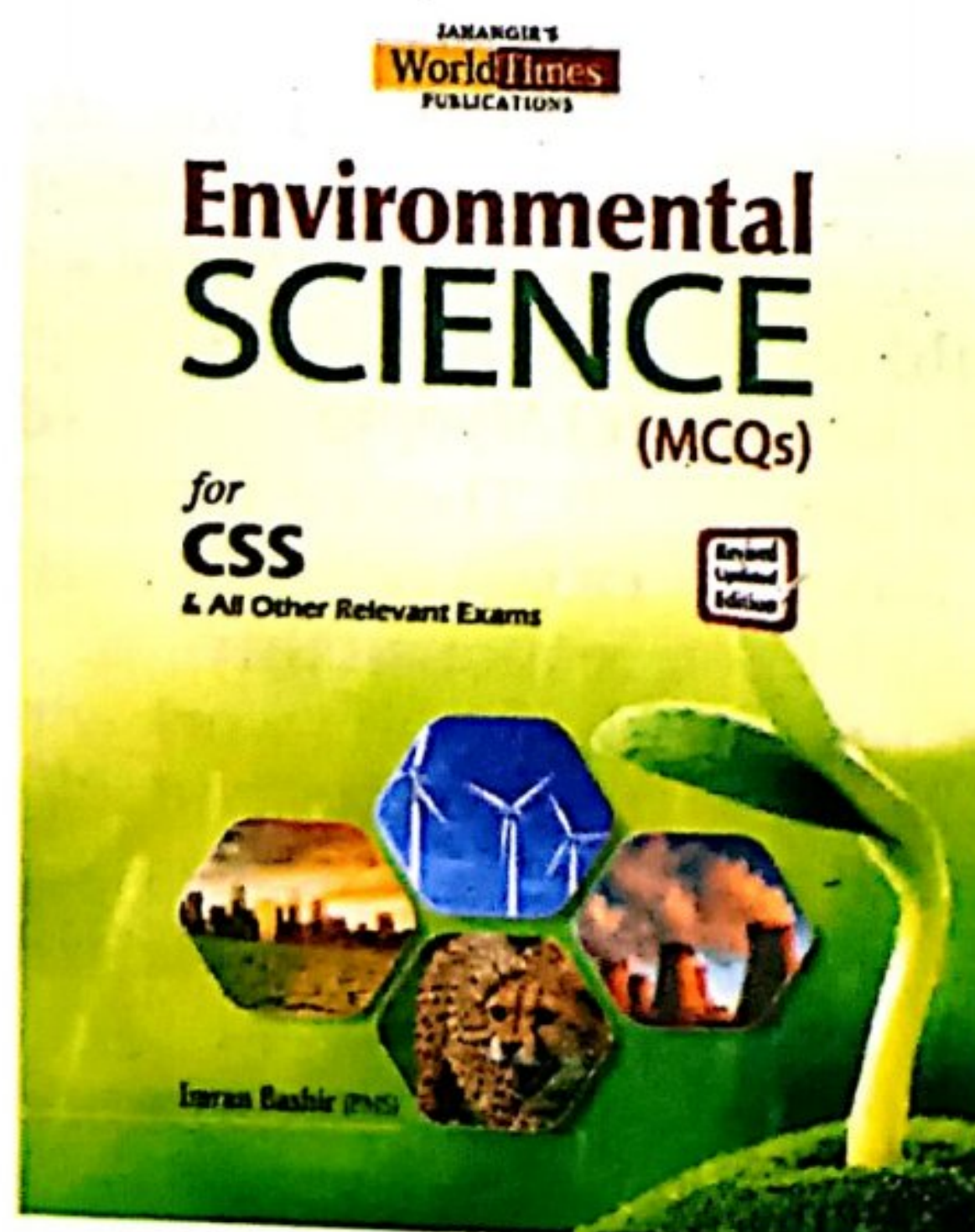
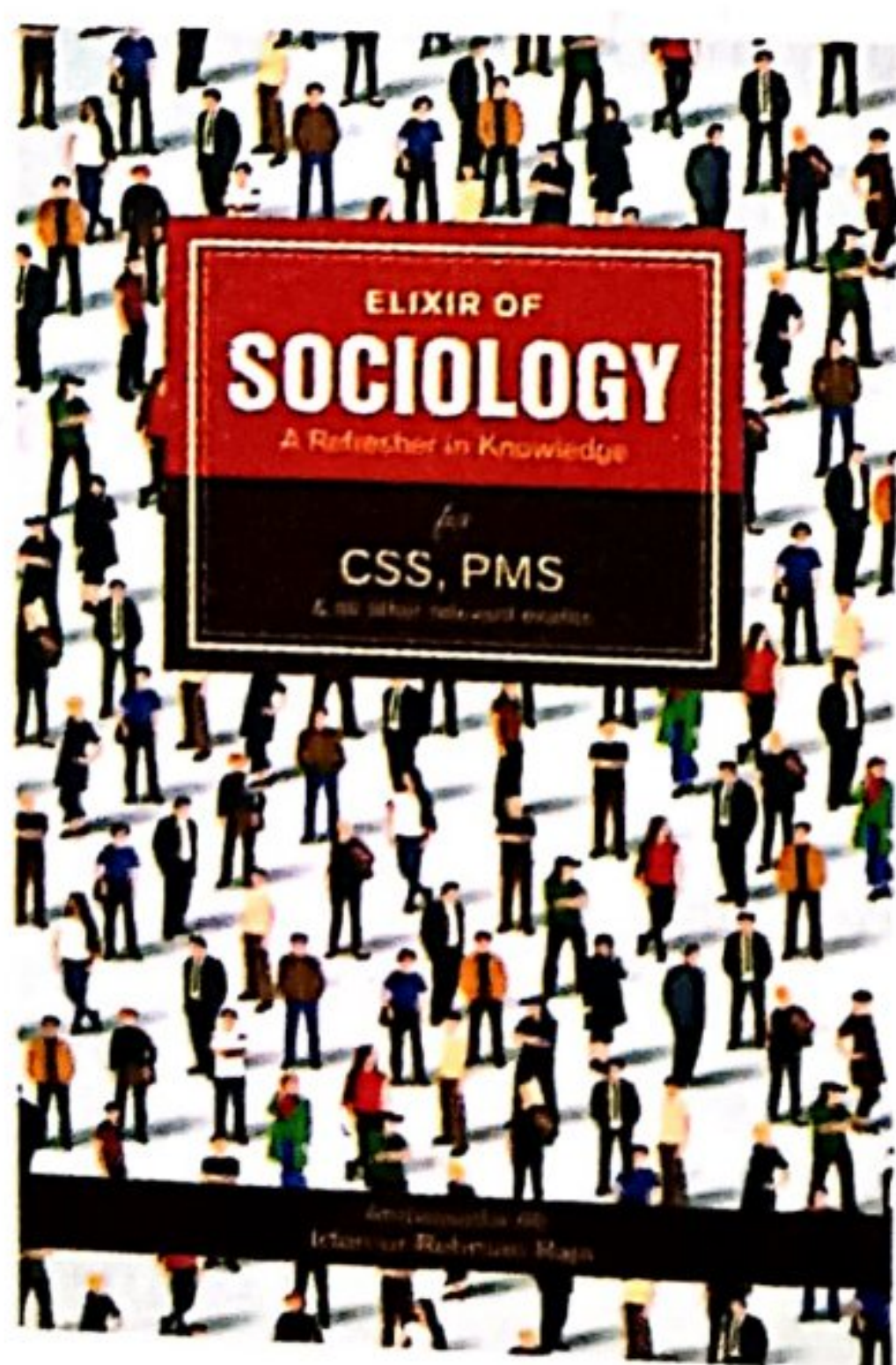
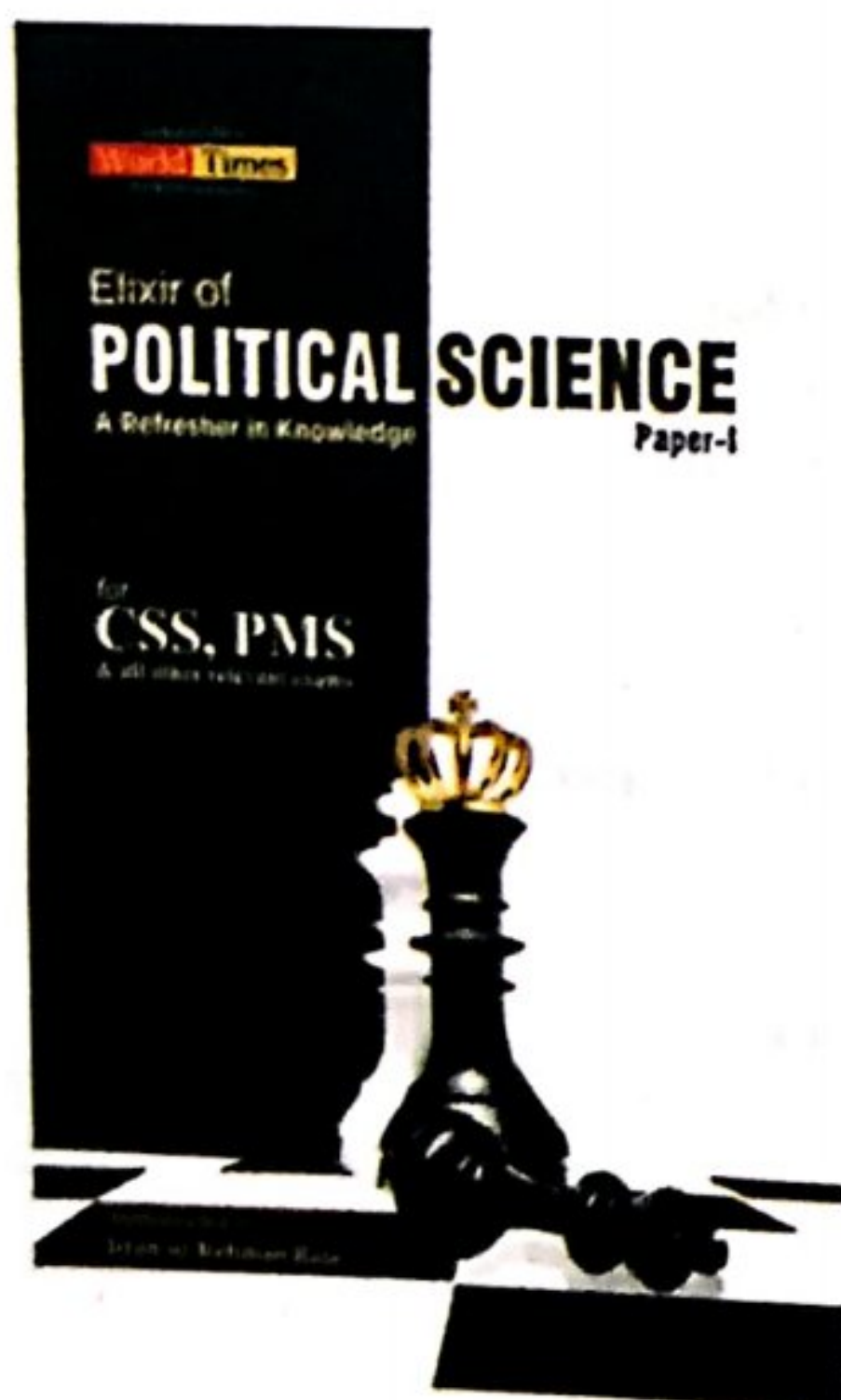
3. The ambiguity of public administration refers to:

(a) The need for more precise job descriptions

(b) The difficulty of specifying specific objectives

(c) A lack of hierarchical structure

(d) *The problem of separating political decisions from administrative ones*



4. Public policies are:

- (a) The laws
- (b) *Made only in cabinet*
- (c) Never made by public administrations
- (d) Authoritative statements by legitimate governmental actors about public problems.

5. Public agencies:

- (a) *Play an important role in shaping public policy*
- (b) Do not provide testimony in support of policy proposals
- (c) Have no role in formulating public policy
- (d) Are not involved in the policy process

6. "Agenda setting" in the policy process refers to:

- (a) *Identifying problems that will be acted on by decision makers*
- (b) Developing formal policy statements
- (c) Putting policies in to action
- (d) Implementing programs

7. Determining whether a particular policy has had the intended effect is called:

- (a) Policy legitimation
- (b) Policy formulation
- (c) *Policy evaluation*
- (d) Policy implementation

8. The transfer of resources and power to lower level authorities which are largely or wholly independent of higher level of governments are termed as:

- (a) *Devolution*
- (b) Decentralization
- (c) Co-production
- (d) Integration

9. A central theme of the "reinvention" is the need for:

- (a) An increase in the size of the bureaucracy
- (b) Standardized methods of problem solving
- (c) Higher taxes
- (d) *More entrepreneurial forms of government*

10. Which one of the following statements is NOT correct with respect to New Public Management?

- (a) It has market orientation.
- (b) *It upholds the need to be centralized.*
- (c) It advocates managerial autonomy.
- (d) It focuses on performance appraisal.

11. If a public servant imposes duties and obligations upon the citizens, which are not required by the law, it can lead to:

- (a) Abuse of law

(b) *Abuse of power*

- (c) Error of authority
- (d) Error of fact finding

12. The term _____ refers to a way of working where service providers and users work together to reach a collective outcome.

- (a) *Co-management*
- (b) Partnership
- (c) Co-production
- (d) Co-operation

13. Which among of the following is not considered as part of the Civil Society?

- (a) Non-governmental organizations
- (b) Religious groups
- (c) *Legislature*
- (d) Think tanks

14. The role of the judiciary in serving as a check on agencies is through:

- (a) *Holding trials for administrators who break the law*
- (b) Reviewing the legality of each policy proposed by an agency
- (c) Writing the rules used by agencies to implement policies
- (d) *Interpreting mandates to agencies and reviewing agency actions*

15. One of the most dramatic developments in recent years in the relationship between agencies and the courts is:

- (a) The courts' refusal to rule on administrative decisions
- (b) *The direct involvement of the courts in agency administration*
- (c) The courts' avoidance of involvement in cases concerning prison management
- (d) The decrease in administrative equity cases heard by the courts

16. The term privatization refers to:

- (a) The placement of private business owners into public positions of authority
- (b) Efforts to give the government more control over certain types of industry

(c) *The use of nongovernmental/private organizations to provide public goods and services*

- (d) Removing private involvement in any government program

17. Increased use of private firms for the delivery of public services comes in part from:

- (a) Ideological conviction by some that service should be provided by nongovernmental/private organizations whenever possible.
- (b) Increased governmental ability to pay private organizations for services
- (c) The effort to involve government in service delivery

(d) *Efforts to increase the governmental role in policy development*

18. In the study of Public Ethics, consequentialism refers to:

- (a) Evaluating right and wrong by studying the actions themselves
- (b) Evaluating things by following the principles of virtuousness
- (c) *Evaluating right and wrong by studying possible outcomes of actions to be taken*
- (d) Evaluating things by following the principles of bureaucracy

19. In which year, was the 18th Constitutional Amendment passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan?

- (a) 2009
- (b) *2010*
- (c) 2011
- (d) None of these

20. The _____ is a summary composite measure of a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health, knowledge and standard of living.

- (a) Humanistic Development Idea
- (b) *Human Development Index*
- (c) Human Development Initiative
- (d) Human Developing Indicator

Town Planning & Urban Management

1. The concept of Master Planning was originated from:

- (a) America
- (b) *Great Britain*
- (c) Russia
- (d) None of these

2. A planning process is cyclic in nature means:

- (a) *It contains continuing studies*
- (b) It is accepted by the concerned circles of the community
- (c) It contains bicycle planning
- (d) None of these

3. Garden City movement by Ebenezer Howard can be described by all the following concepts/characteristics, except:

- (a) *A city surrounded by green belt*
- (b) Satellite town
- (c) A city of finite size
- (d) None of these

4. In the 20th century, cities grew dramatically in size primarily because of:

- (a) Improved road networks
- (b) Time-saving transportation modes
- (c) Behavioural change of transportation system users
- (d) *None of these*

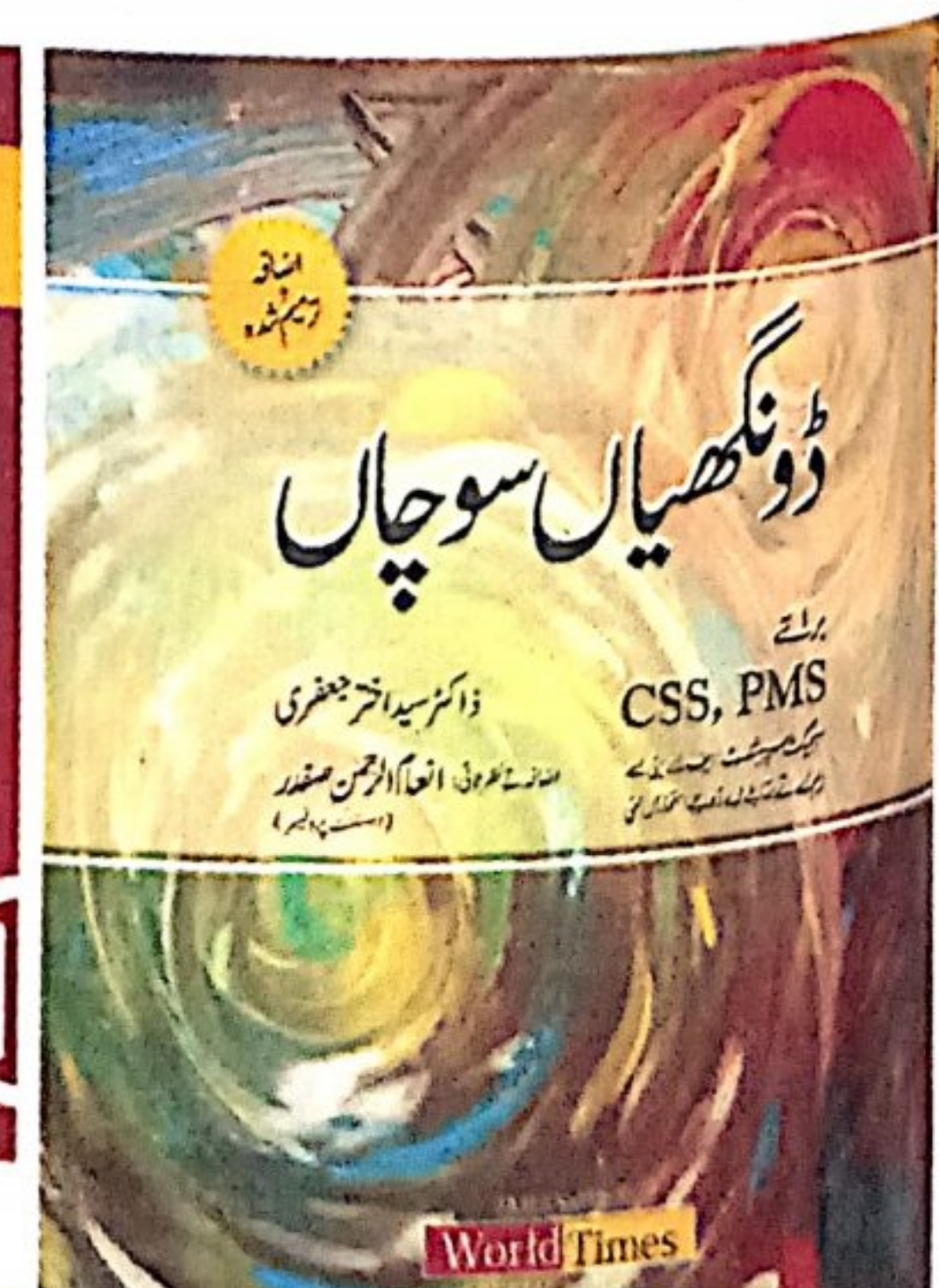
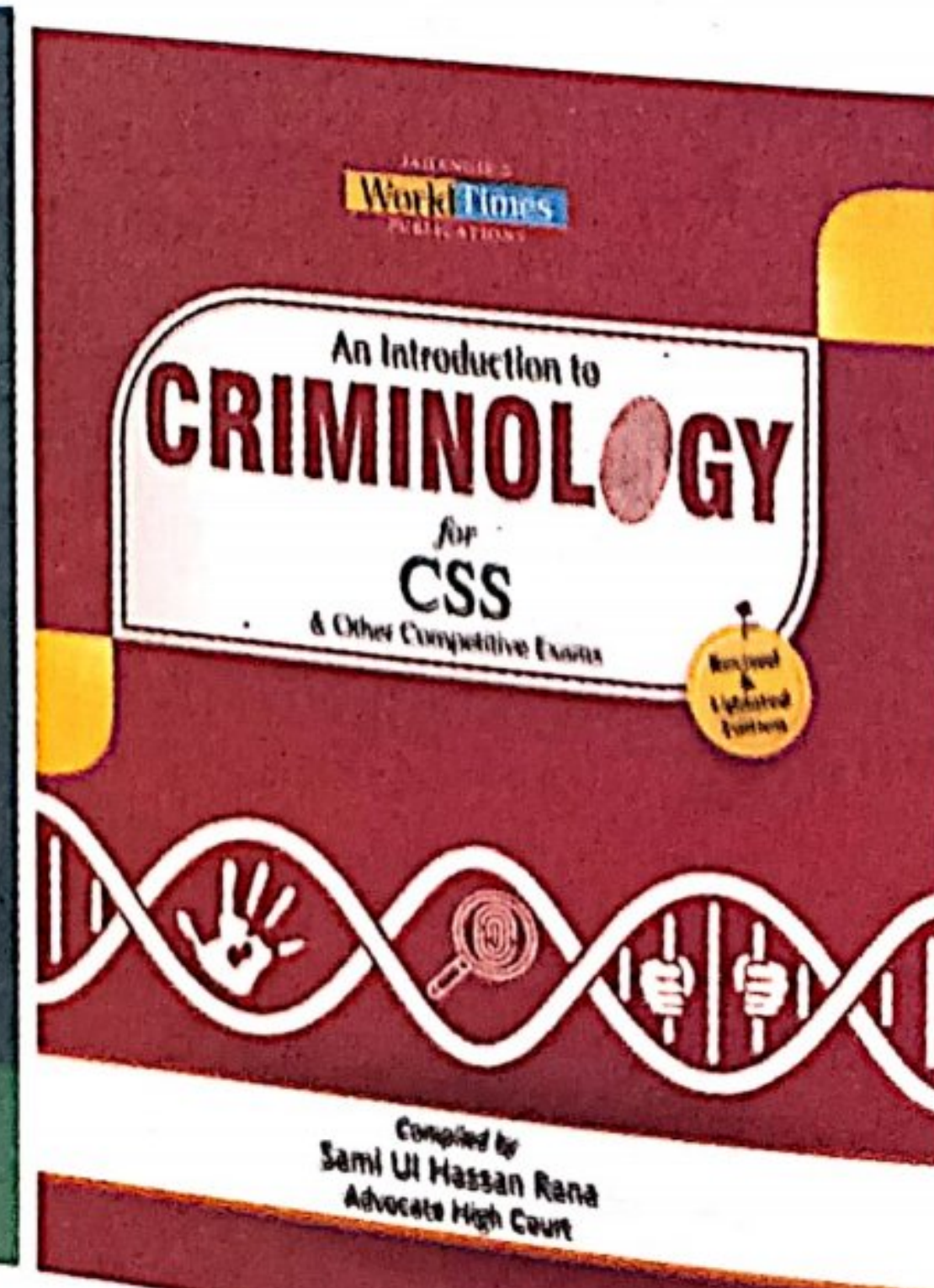
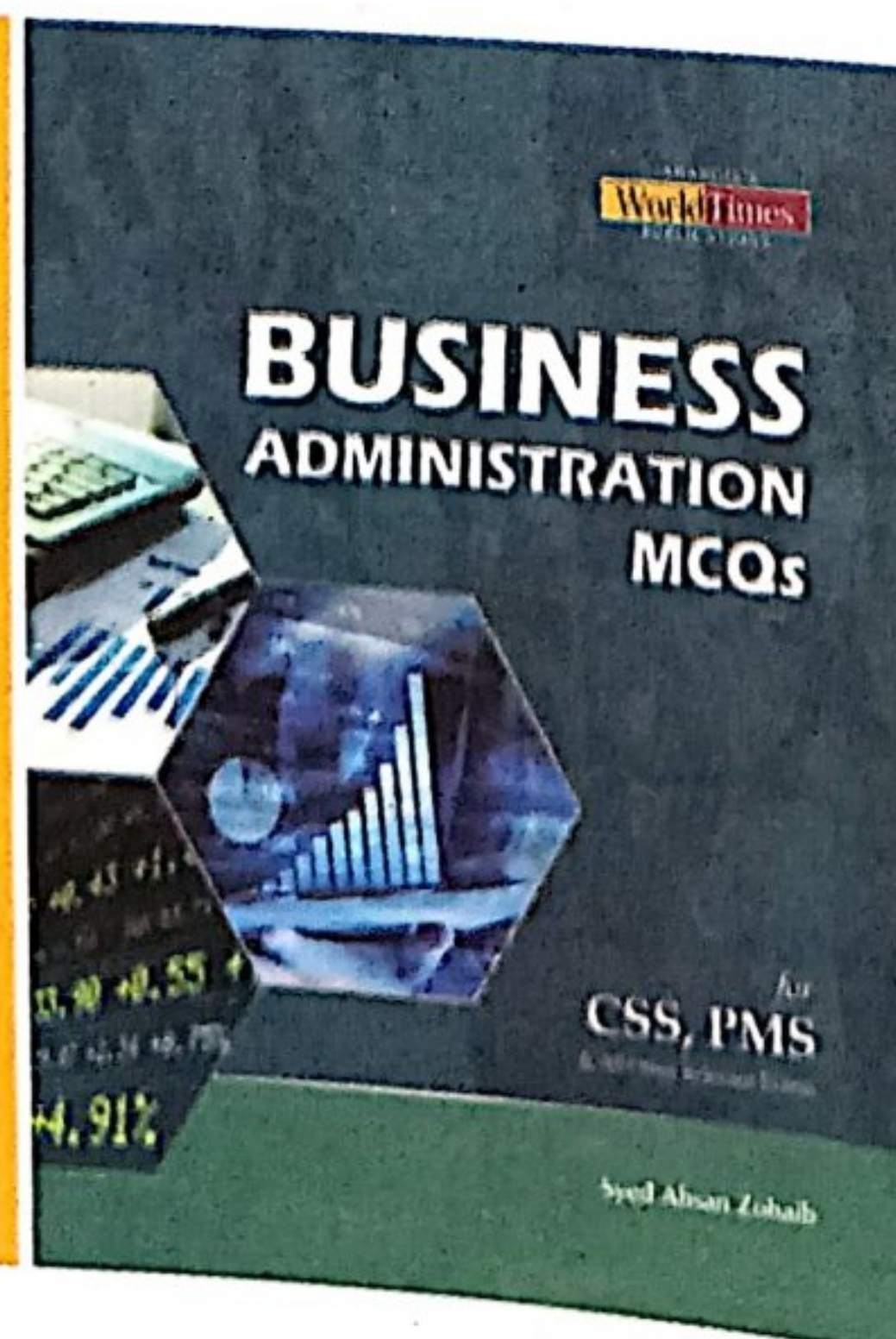
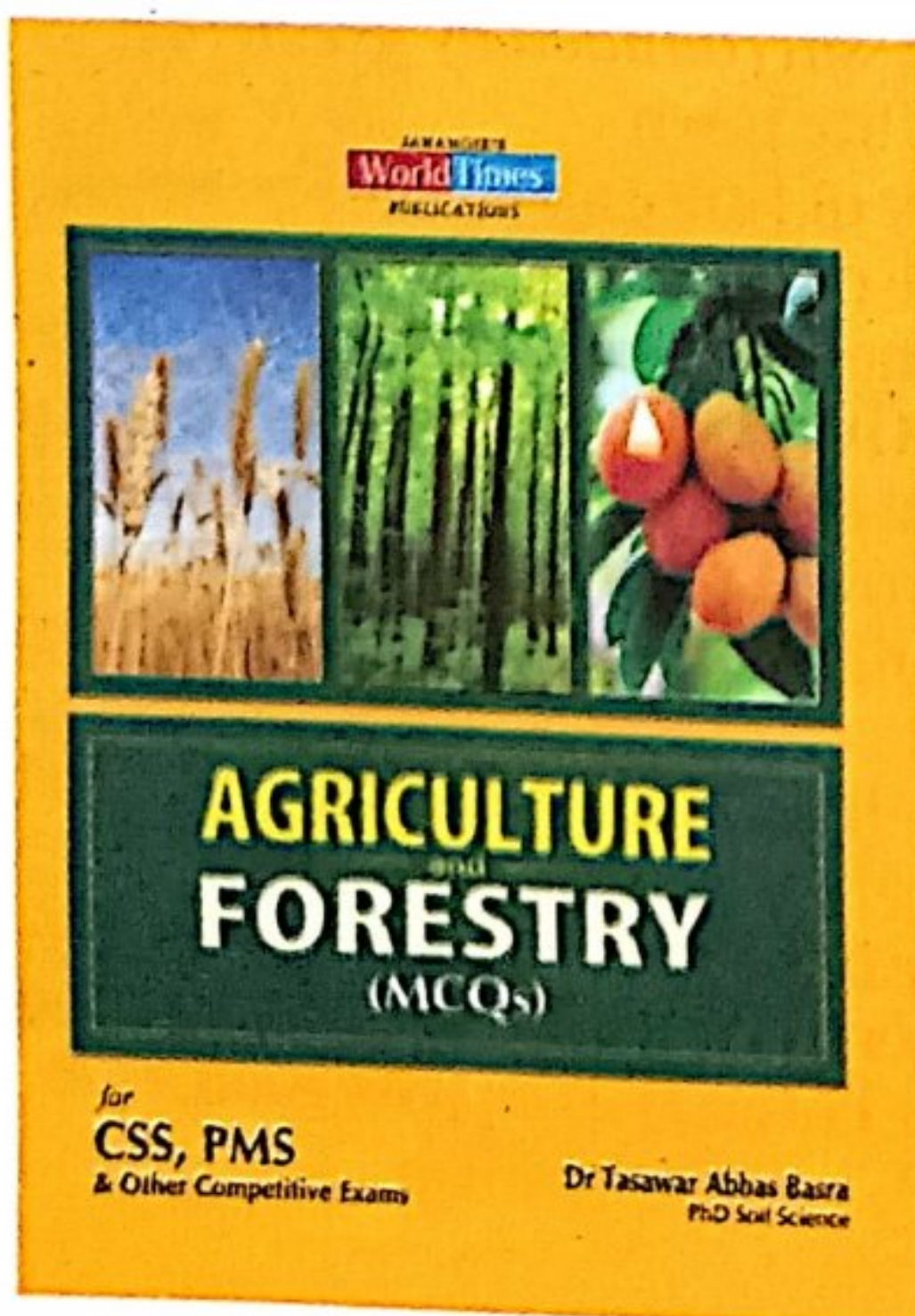
5. The criterion of _____ cannot be used for categorizing a Region.

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- (a) Geography
(b) Climatic conditions
(c) Population age
(d) *None of these*
6. The largest sector by water usage across the world is:
(a) *Agriculture* (b) Industrial
(c) Domestic (d) None of these
7. Master Plan for Lahore Division 2050 is being prepared (through the engagement of consultants) by:
(a) *Lahore Development Authority*
(b) Lahore Metropolitan Corporation
(c) Planning and Development Board, Government of Punjab
(d) None of these
8. Preparing a _____ to guide future development has become a fundamental component of a master planning exercise in recent times.
(a) *Vision statement*
(b) Mission statement
(d) Financial statement
(c) None of these
9. _____ is the estimation of the number and type of travel trips.
(a) Demand analysis
(b) *Traffic performance analysis*
(c) Capacity analysis
(d) None of these
10. The demolition of an existing building and its replacement by a new building is:
(a) *Redevelopment* (b) Rehabilitation
(c) Restoration (d) None of these
11. _____ generally constitute the second largest land area in urban settlements located in plain areas.
(a) Residential land use
(b) Open spaces
(c) *Roads* (d) None of these
12. Select the correct statement:
(a) Every urban place is a city
(b) *Every city is an urban place*
(c) 'Urban' and 'city' are the same concept
(d) None of these

13. Developing mixed-income housing is an important strategy for regenerating:
(a) Urban core areas
(b) Residential neighbourhoods
(c) *Commercial zones*
(d) None of these
14. Land banking is a tool used by private investors speculating on land value as a _____ endeavour.
(a) Welfare
(b) Poverty alleviation
(c) Equitable development
(d) *None of these*
15. Non-basic activities, as defined in Economic Base Theory, provide the needs of persons residing within a community's:
(a) Economic limits
(b) *Geographic limits*
(c) Spatial extent (d) None of these
16. The approach in which squatters give prime locations of the land to owners and keep the rest for their housing is:
(a) Land sharing (b) *Land pooling*
(c) Settlement up-gradation
(d) None of these
17. _____ facing side of the buildings receives maximum sunlight during the winter season in Pakistan.
(a) North (b) East
(c) West (d) *None of these*
18. _____ is not an example of a renewable energy source.
(a) Water (b) Biomass
(c) Wood (d) *None of these*
19. Remote sensing is the art and science of making measurements of the _____ using sensors on airplanes or satellites.
(a) Earth (b) Space
(c) *Atmosphere* (d) None of these
20. A/n _____ is a conventional picture of the earth's surface as seen from the above.
(a) *Map* (b) Plan

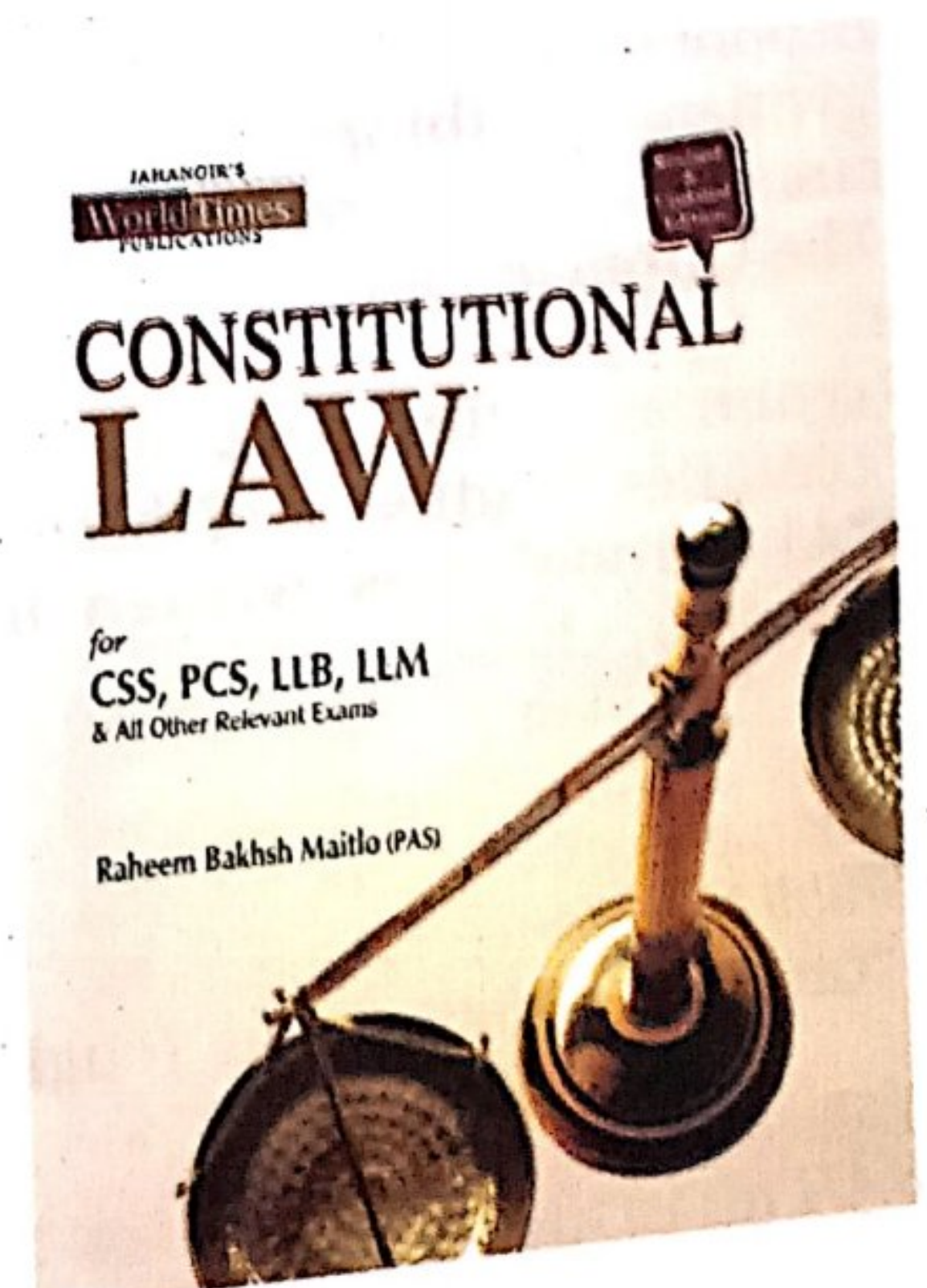
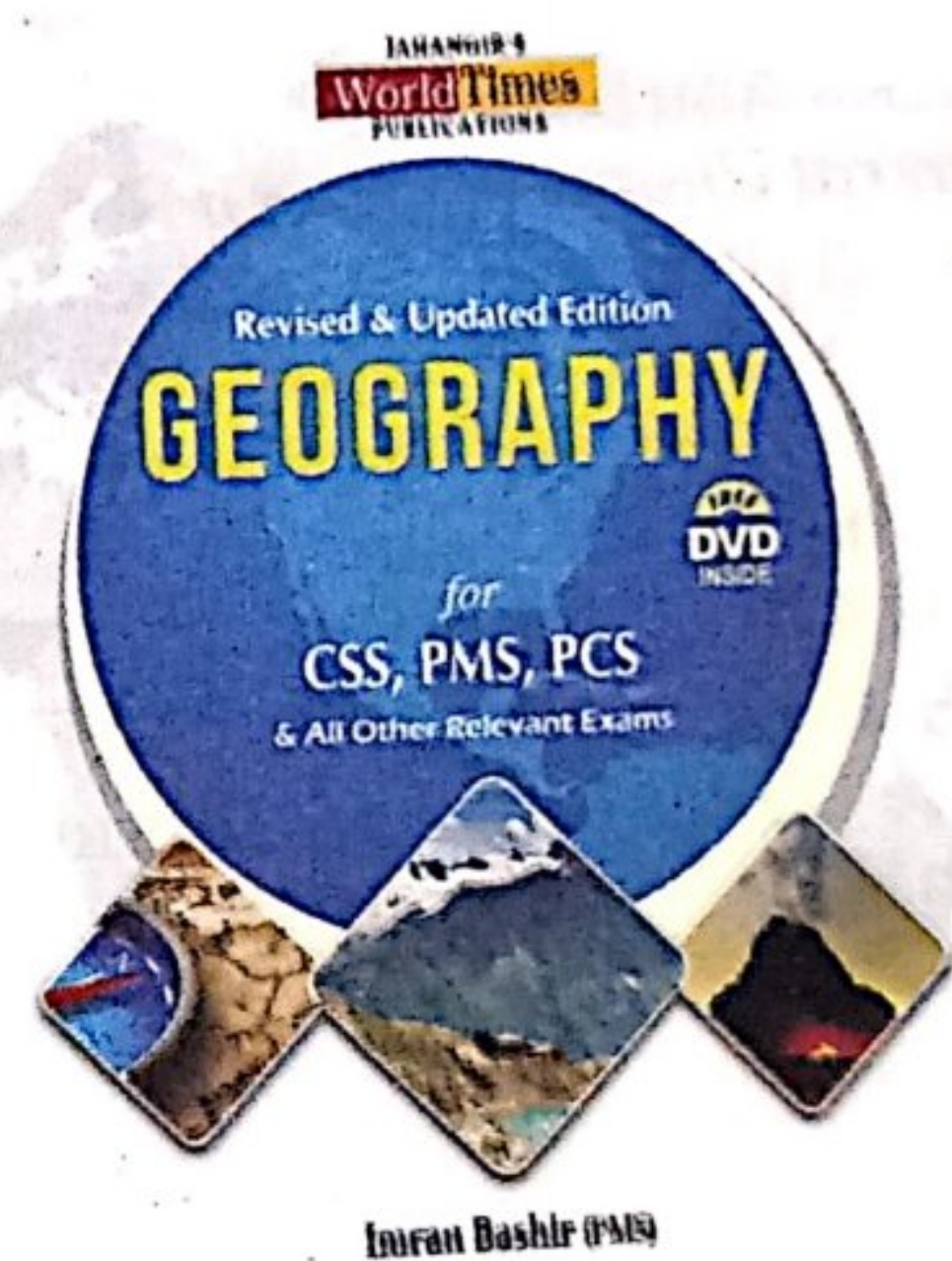
- (c) Image (d) None of these
- History of Pakistan & India**
1. Why Arab rule could not extend beyond Sindh and Multan?
(a) Geographical barriers and rigid terrain
(b) Strong resistance from local rulers
(c) Lack of interest in territorial expansion
(d) *Internal conflicts among the Arabs*
2. Why did Mahmud of Ghazni launch multiple invasions into India during the 11th century?
(a) For territorial expansion
(b) *For collecting economic resources*
(c) For spreading Islam
(d) For punishing Indian rulers
3. The Muslim rulers of Delhi in the Pre-Mughal era were called Sultans as they were bound to:
(a) Avoid further expansion
(b) Nominate their successors
(c) *Seek recognition from the Caliph after acquiring power*
(d) Wage Jihad against the infidels
4. What was the key feature of the Mughal Rajput policy during their rule in India?
(a) Forced conversion of Rajput rulers to Islam
(b) Exclusion of Rajputs from administrative positions
(c) Complete annexation of Rajput territories
(d) *Integration of Rajput nobility into the Mughal administration*
5. Indicate one of the Key outcomes of the Lucknow Pact of 1916 between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League.
(a) *Acceptance of separate electorates*
(b) Communal award for religious minorities
(c) Launching of the Khilafat

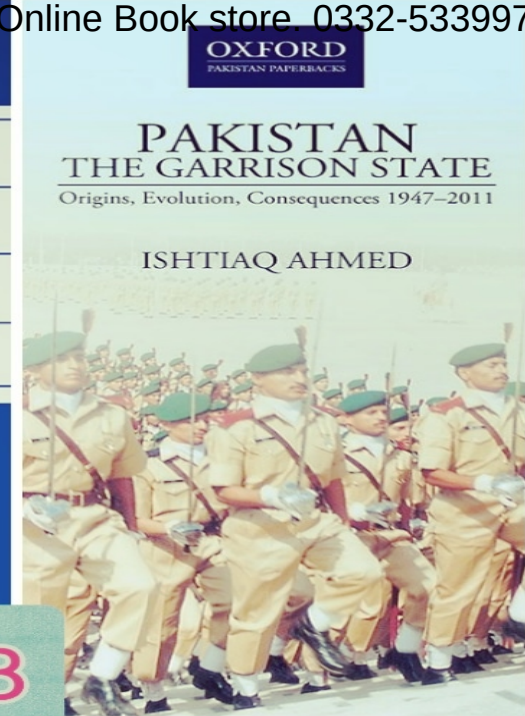
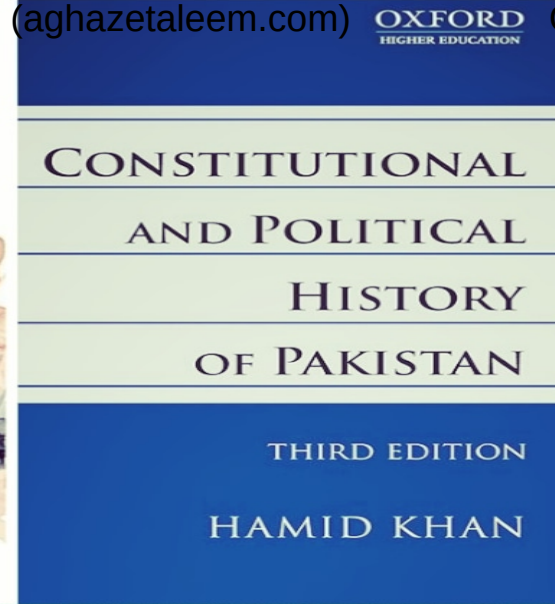
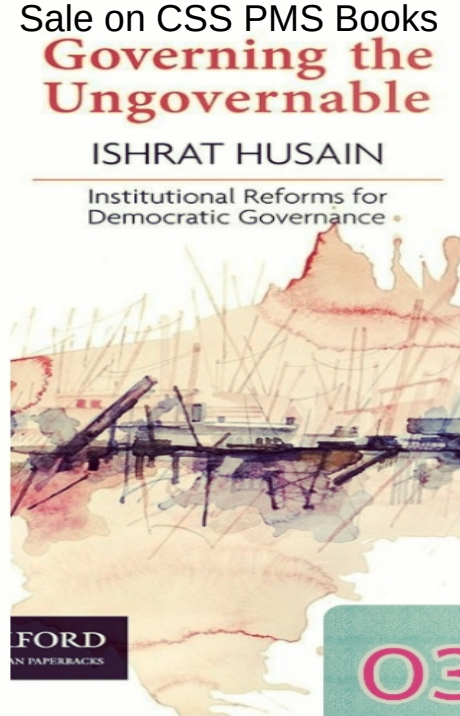


- Movement
(d) Demand for complete independence from British rule
6. What was the notable feature of the Government of India Act of 1935?
(a) Acceptance of the complete representation of Indians
(b) *Introduction of a federal structure for British India*
(c) Abolition of the princely states
(d) Granting complete independence to India
7. Which constitutional framework operated in Pakistan between 1947 and 1956?
(a) The Indian Independence Act of 1947
(b) The Lahore Resolution of 1940
(c) *The Government of India Act of 1935*
(d) The Pakistan Independence Order of 1947
8. What led Pakistan to turn to the West in the early years after its creation?
(a) Ideological alignment with Western Countries
(b) Historical ties and cultural affinity with Western nations
(c) Strategic partnership to counter regional countries
(d) *Economic and military assistance during the Cold War era*
9. During the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, what strategic and controversial military operation did the Pakistani military initiate in the eastern part of the country?
(a) *Operation Searchlight*
(b) Operation Swift Resort
(c) Operation Desert Storm
(d) Operation Gibraltar
10. Which of the following statements best describes the overall trend in Pak-India diplomatic relations?
(a) Continuous periods of peace and collaboration
(b) Uninterrupted cooperation in economic and cultural exchanges
(c) Consistent and amicable resolution of territorial disputes
(d) *Periods of tension, occasional conflicts, and efforts towards normalization*
11. What is the primary objective of Pakistan's "Look East" policy in its foreign relations?
(a) Strengthening existing ties with Western countries
(b) Promoting cultural exchanges with Singapore
(c) *Establishing economic & diplomatic relations with East Asian*

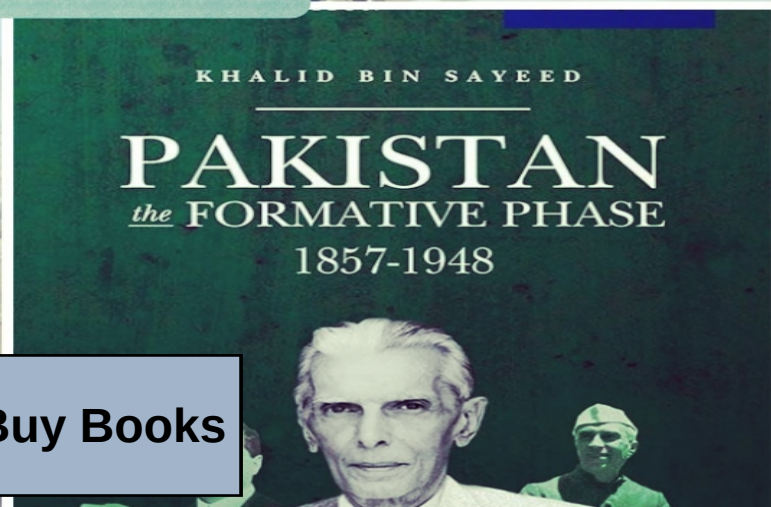
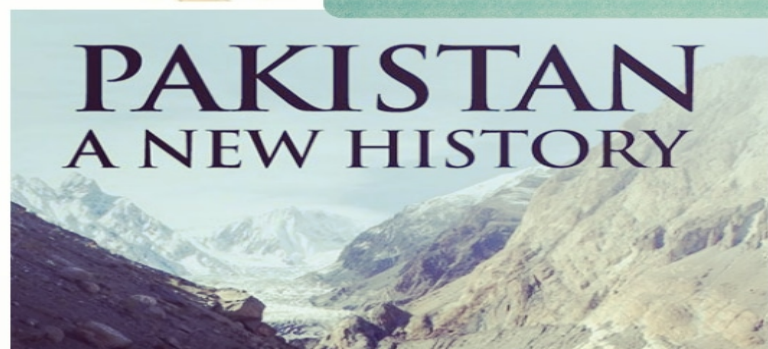
- nations*
(d) Enhancing relations with India
12. What marked Benazir Bhutto's tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan from 1988 to 1990?
(a) Economic growth
(b) *The first time a woman led a Muslim-majority country*
(c) Political harmony was achieved
(d) Constitutional development
13. What was the most significant achievement of the PPP-led coalition government in its tenure from 2008 to 2013?
(a) *Completion of 5-year term*
(b) Comprehensive Reforms
(c) Restoration of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry in 2009
(d) Death of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad operation
14. What significant impact was caused to Pakistan by direct military rule and indirect political management?
(a) Corrosion of civil liberties and human rights
(b) *Unstable civil institutions*
(c) Economic stagnation and high unemployment
(d) Encouragement of foreign direct investment and economic growth
15. What event led to the initiation of Pervez Musharraf's trial under Article 6 of the Constitution of Pakistan?
(a) *Removal and house arrest of Judges*
(b) The suspension of the Constitution in the aftermath of the coup in 1999
(c) The assassination of Benazir Bhutto
(d) The Lal Masjid Operation in Islamabad
16. What role did the Pakistan Army play in the Abbottabad Operation in May 2011 that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden?
(a) *Was unaware of the operation until after its completion*
(b) Actively collaborated with the United States in planning and execution
(c) Provided intelligence support but was not directly involved in the operation
(d) Attempted to thwart the operation to protect bin Laden.
17. What impact did Pakistan's support for the US-led 'War on Terror' have on the country?
(a) Isolation from international affairs and alliances
(b) Enhanced regional cooperation and diplomatic relations

- (c) Economic growth and increased stability
(d) *Internal challenges, including security issues and economic strains*
18. During military rule in Pakistan, how did the judiciary typically respond to the military regimes?
(a) Upheld constitutional principles
(b) Opposed military interventions
(c) *Collaborated with the military regimes*
(d) Demonstrated neutrality
19. What is the most severe challenge for Pakistan that can lead to its destruction?
(a) Indian threat
(b) *Environmental issues and unregulated investment in real estate*
(c) Political instability
(d) TTP
20. What are the primary grievances of the Baloch insurgents involved in the ongoing insurgency in Pakistan?
(a) *Economic disparities and resource exploitation*
(b) Religious differences
(c) Disputes over international borders
(d) Cultural identity issues

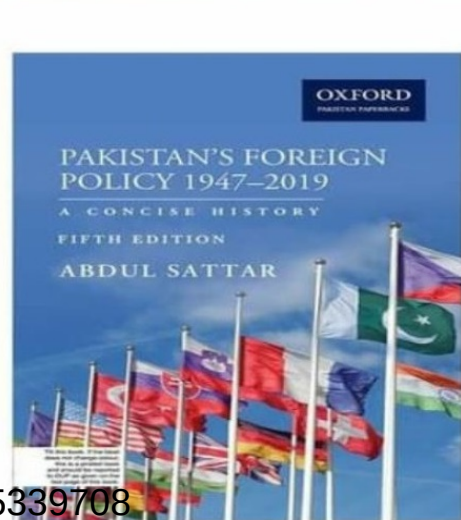
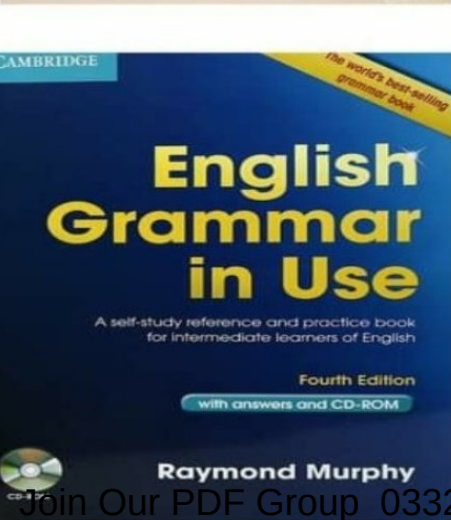
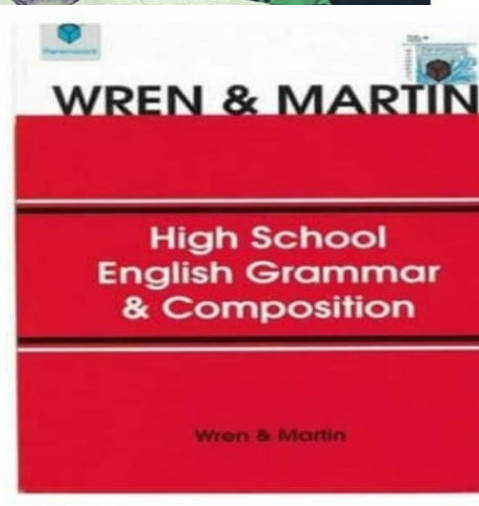
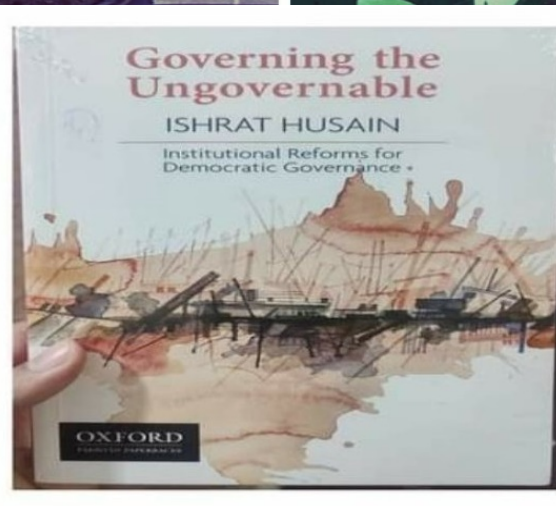
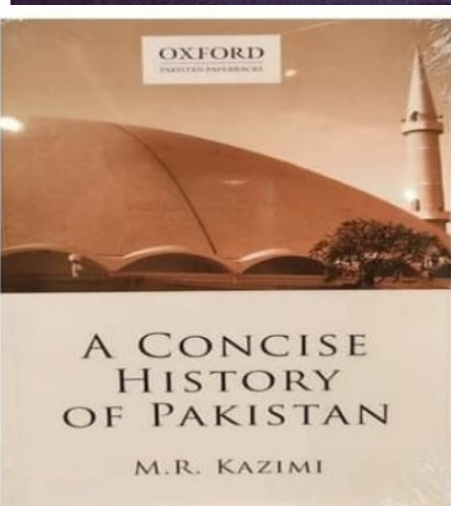




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CSS-2024 SOLVED PAPERS

Islamic History & Culture

- The Annual Fair of Ukaz in pre-Islamic Arabia was held at:
(a) Makkah (b) Madina
(c) Riaz (d) **Taif**
- Who was the first martyr in Islam?
(a) Hazrat Hamza (رضى الله عنه)
(b) **Hazrat Sumayya** (رضى الله عنها)
(c) Hazrat Yasir (رضى الله عنه)
(d) None of these
- "Year of the Grief" in the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was:
(a) 7th (b) 8th
(c) 9th (d) **10th**
- The Pagan Tribe which was allies of the Muslims was:
(a) Banu Asad (b) Banu Khuza'ah
(c) **Banu Khazraj** (d) Banu Bakr
- The number of the companions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in Gbhazwa Tabuk was:
(a) 10,000 (b) **30,000**
(c) 50,000 (d) None of these
- "Mubahala" was offered by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to:
(a) Banu Quraiza (b) Banu Nazir
(c) Banu Bakr
(d) **Delegate of Najran**
- Jerusalem was conquered in the period of:
(a) Hazrat Abu Bakr (رضى الله عنه)
(b) **Hazrat Umar** (رضى الله عنه)
(c) Hazrat Usman (رضى الله عنه)
(d) Hazrat Ali (رضى الله عنه)
- The Ottoman dynasty was established in the year:
(a) **1299 AD** (b) 1517 AD
(c) 1605 AD (d) 1840 AD
- "The Preaching of Islam" is written by:
(a) Theodor Nöldeke
(b) **T.W. Arnold**
(c) Philip Hitti
(d) W. Montgomery Watt
- Ibn e Rushd the Great Muslim Philosopher was:
(a) Egyptian (b) **Spanish**
(c) Iranian (d) Arabian
- The Ottoman Empire lasted for over:
(a) 5 centuries (b) **6 centuries**
(c) 7 centuries (d) None of these
- "Al Farooq" was written by Great Indian Scholar:
(a) Shah Waliullah
(b) Sir Syed Ahmed Khan
(c) Suleiman Nadvi
(d) **Shibli Noumani**
- "Ghazwa e Mouta" was fought in:
(a) 6 AH (b) 7 AH
(c) **8 AH** (d) 10 AH

- Social Boycott of Banu Hashim took place in Nabvi year:
(a) 6th (b) **7th**
(c) 8th (d) 9th
- First Caliph of the Abbasid Caliphate was:
(a) **Saffah**
(b) Haroon UR Rasheed
(c) Mansoor (d) Mamoon
- Who was the last Abbasid Caliph?
(a) Al Qaim (b) Al Zahir
(c) Al Mustakfi (d) **Al Mustasim**
- The First book on International Law (Katab ul Siyar) was written by:
(a) **Imam Muhammad**
(b) Imam Abu Yousuf
(c) Imam Abu Hanifa
(d) Imam Sahfihi
- "Ghunyat ul Talibeen" was written by Great Sufi named:
(a) Al Ghazali (b) Al Sha'ahrani
(c) **Abdul Qadir Jilani**
(d) Ali Hajwairi
- Ibn e Khaldoon was born in:
(a) Iraq (b) Egypt
(c) Syria (d) **Tunisia**
- "The Reconstruction of Religious thoughts in Islam" was written by:
(a) T.W. Arnold (b) Ameer Ali
(c) **Dr Muhammad Iqbal**
(d) None of these

British History

- Who is the longest serving Britain Prime Minister?
(a) **Robert Walpole**
(b) Margaret Thatcher
(c) James Callaghan
(d) None of these
- The British colony of Singapore was established as trading post along which important maritime route:
(a) Suez Canal
(b) **Strait of Malacca**
(c) Cape of Good Hope
(d) None of these
- The 'Scramble for Africa' refers to the period of intense European colonial expansion in Africa during the centuries of:
(a) 18th and 19th (b) 17th and 18th
(c) **19th and 20th** (d) None of these
- Which of these British noble ranks is the highest?
(a) Marquess (b) **Duke**
(c) Baron (d) None of these
- The Treaty of Versailles was signed on:
(a) 21 June 1919 (b) 22 June 1919
(c) **28 June 1919** (d) None of these
- How many Prime Ministers were there in Britain during the World

War I?

- (a) **Two** (b) Three
(c) One (d) None of these
- What adjective was common used to describe London in the 1960s?
(a) Smashing (b) Smart
(c) **Swinging** (d) None of these
- The Act of Union was passed between England and Scotland in:
(a) 1717 (b) **1707**
(c) 1800 (d) None of these
- Who became Prime Minister after Margaret Thatcher?
(a) Cullodena Newcomen
(b) James Callaghan
(c) Thomas Cuddodin
(d) **None of these**
- Which British Prime Minister sent troops to Iraq in 2003?
(a) John Michael (b) **Tony Blair**
(c) Johnny Carlos (d) None of these
- The nationalization of the Bank of England happened in:
(a) 1945 (b) **1946**
(c) 1846 (d) None of these
- When was Elizabeth II coronated?
(a) **2nd June 1953**
(b) 2nd June 1951
(c) 2nd June 1946
(d) None of these
- Who was the British monarch during the American Revolutionary War?
(a) King George I (b) King George II
(c) **King George III** (d) None of these
- The British colonial policy of apartheid was implemented in which African country:
(a) Nigeria (b) **South Africa**
(c) Niger (d) None of these
- When was the Battle of Waterloo happened?
(a) **18 June 1815** (b) 18 June 1915
(c) 18 June 1917 (d) None of these
- In which one of these countries was not a part of the British Empire?
(a) Kenya (b) **Spain**
(c) Australia (d) None of these
- Which major conflict took place during the early Victorian period, often referred to as the "Great Game"?
(a) The Boer War
(b) Civil War
(c) **The Crimean War**
(d) None of these
- The League of Augsburg was signed in:
(a) **20 December 1689**
(b) 20 December 1680
(c) 20 December 1677
(d) None of these

19. Who was the longest reigning Hanoverian monarch?

- (a) Edward I (b) Edward III
(c) Edward II (d) None of these

20. King Edward VIII had announced his abdication from the Britain throne on:

- (a) 14 December 1936
(b) 12 December 1936
(c) 11 December 1936
(d) None of these

European History

1. What event marked the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789?

- (a) The Storming of the Bastille
(b) The Battle of Waterloo
(c) The Reign of Terror
(d) None of these

2. The Napoleonic Code, a comprehensive legal system, was introduced by Napoleon Bonaparte in:

- (a) 1789 (b) 1799
(c) 1804 (d) None of these

3. Which battle marked Napoleon's final defeat, leading to his exile to the island of Elba in 1814?

- (a) Battle of Austerlitz
(b) Battle of Leipzig
(c) Battle of Waterloo
(d) None of these

4. Which major European powers were the key participants in the Concert of Europe?

- (a) France, Russia and Spain
(b) Britain, Austria and Prussia
(c) Italy, Sweden and Ottoman Empire
(d) None of these

5. Which political ideology was endorsed by the Concert of Europe as a means of preserving the existing order in Europe?

- (a) Liberalism (b) Conservatism
(c) Socialism (d) None of these

6. The Industrial Revolution, characterized by technological advancements and the shift to mechanized production, primarily began in which country during the early 19th century?

- (a) France (b) Germany
(c) United Kingdom
(d) None of these

7. What political ideology, emphasizing individual rights, representative government, and rule of law, gained prominence in the wake of the Napoleonic era?

- (a) Conservatism (b) Liberalism
(c) Nationalism (d) None of these

8. What was the "Eastern Question" in 19th century European politics?

(a) The status of the Ottoman Empire and its territorial integrity

- (b) The balance of power in Central Europe
(c) The influence of Austria in the Balkans
(d) None of these

9. The Treaty of Paris (1856), which ended the Crimean War (1853-56), aimed to:

- (a) Strengthen the Ottoman Empire
(b) Weaken Russia's influence in the Black Sea
(c) Establish a balance of power in the Balkans
(d) None of these

10. The Expedition of the Thousand, a crucial event in Italian unification, was led by:

- (a) Giuseppe Mazzini
(b) Camillo Cavour
(c) Giuseppe Garibaldi
(d) None of these

11. The North German Confederation, a precursor to the German Empire, was led by the dominance of which German state?

- (a) Bavaria (b) Prussia
(c) Saxony (d) None of these

12. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 played a crucial role in the final stages of German unification. What significant event occurred during this war?

- (a) The Siege of Paris
(b) The Battle of Leipzig
(c) The Treaty of Tilsit
(d) None of these

13. The alliance system that contributed to the escalation of the First World War included which major alliances?

- (a) Triple Entente (Allies) and Central Powers
(b) Triple Alliance and Entente Cordiale
(c) Axis Powers and Allies
(d) None of these

14. The ultimatum delivered by Austria-Hungary to Serbia after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 contained what controversial demand?

- (a) Serbian recognition of Austrian sovereignty
(b) Serbian military occupation of Bosnia
(c) Serbian involvement in the assassination plot
(d) None of these

15. What treaty led to Russia's withdrawal from the First World War?

- (a) Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

(b) Treaty of Versailles

- (c) Treaty of Trianon
(d) None of these

16. Which Eastern European country was led by Marshal Józef Piłsudski, who established an authoritarian regime in the interwar period characterized by his "Sanation" policies?

- (a) Hungary (b) Poland
(c) Romania (d) None of these

17. Operation Barbarossa, launched by Nazi Germany in 1941, was a military campaign directed against which country?

- (a) France (b) Soviet Union
(c) United Kingdom
(d) None of these

18. Who was known as the "Desert Fox" during World War II?

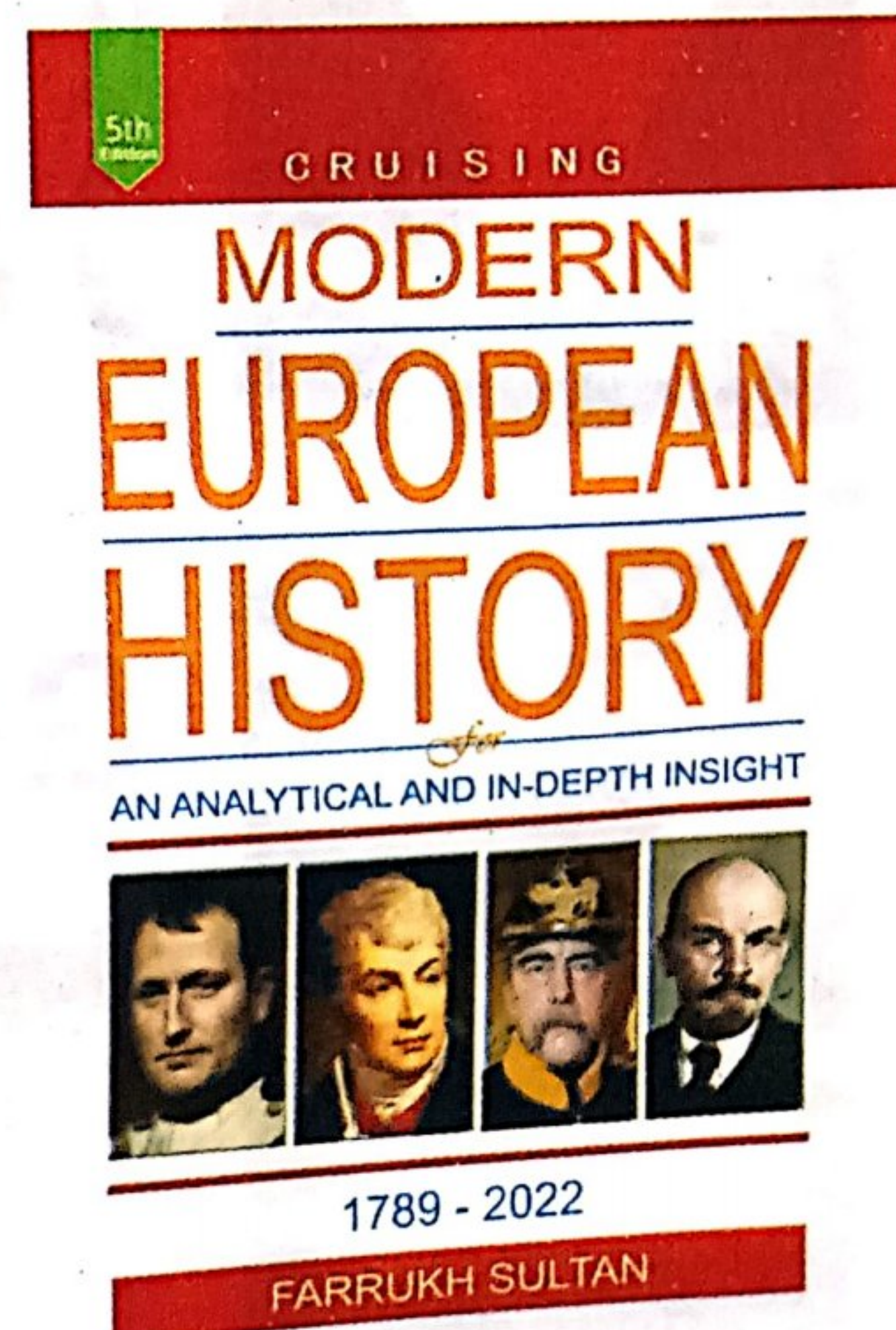
- (a) Erwin Rommel
(b) Paul von Hindenburg
(c) Manfred von Richthofen
(d) None of these

19. The Marshall Plan, initiated in 1948, aimed to provide economic assistance to war-torn European countries. Which country proposed and led this plan?

- (a) United States (b) Soviet Union
(c) United Kingdom
(d) None of these

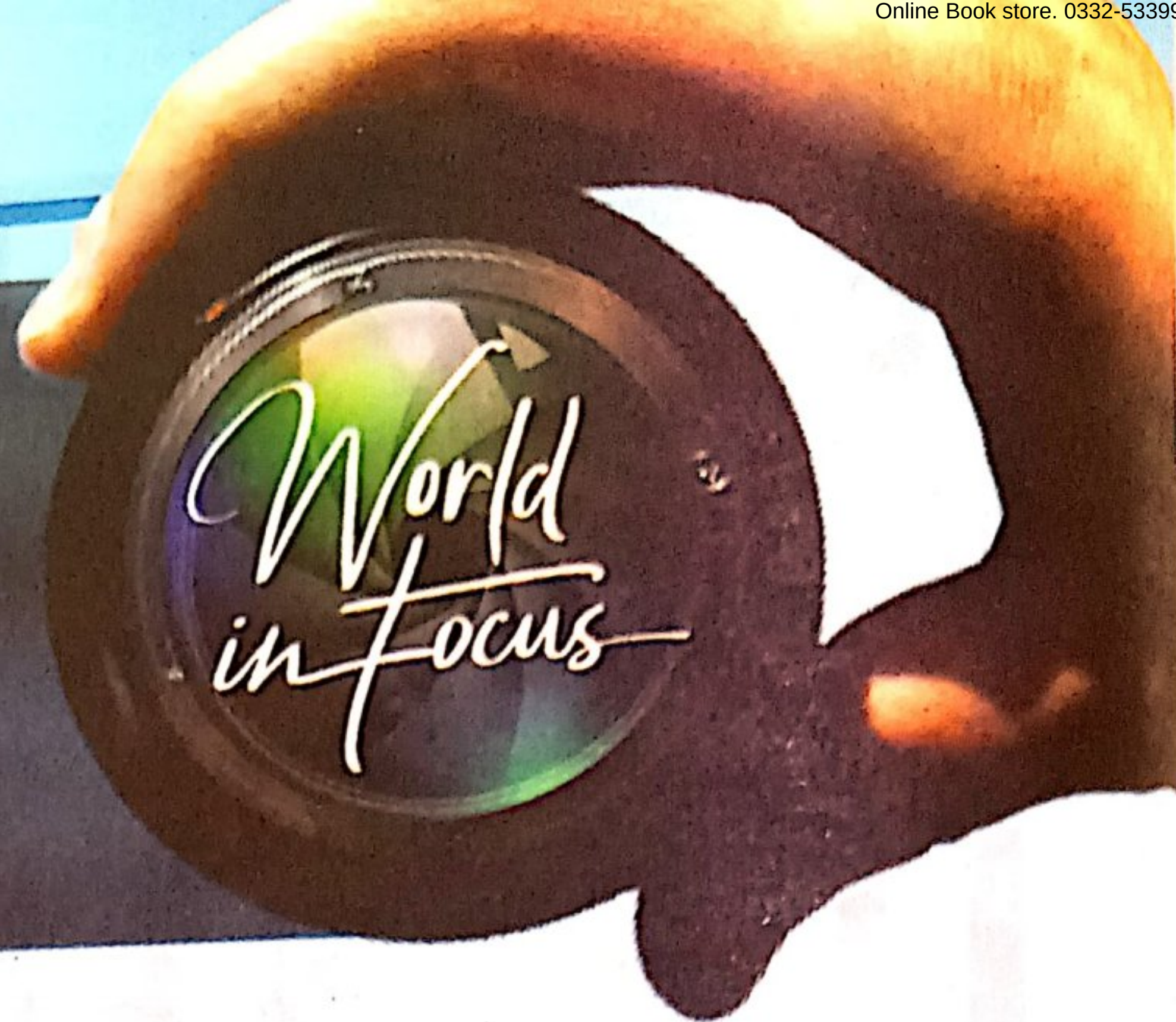
20. The division of Germany into East and West, symbolized by the Berlin Wall, was a direct consequence of:

- (a) The Yalta Conference
(b) The Potsdam Conference
(c) The Tehran Conference
(d) None of these



Feb-Mar '24

NATIONAL



M. Usman Butt



Feb. 16: Pakistan was downgraded to an "authoritarian regime" in the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2023 report – the only Asian country to be downgraded.

Feb. 16: The Apex Committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) approved the plan that aims to increase the country's tax-to-GDP ratio to 18 percent by 2029 from the current 8.5 percent.

Feb. 16: Pakistan's Hamza Saeed won gold medal in the 33rd Al-Fajr Open Taekwondo Championship which was held in Iran.

Feb. 17: The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations announced to implement a Sustainable and Regenerative Management of Rice Production to enhance sustainable rice production landscapes in Sindh.

Feb. 17: The HBL PSL 9, featuring six teams, exploded into action at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.

Feb. 18: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) declared null and void the imposition of a 5% tax on immovable property.

Feb. 19: The Caretaker government granted "Division" status to the Intelligence Bureau (IB), allowing its Director General (DG) to hold the additional role of secretary of the division.

Feb. 19: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) operations were put directly under the Prime Minister Office (Cabinet Division), instead of drawing its link through the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC).

Feb. 19: Saad Ahmed Waraich, Pakistan's new charge d'affaires in India, reached the Indian capital Delhi to take over his diplomatic responsibilities.

Feb. 19: Pakistan faced a 17 percent increase in cyberattacks in 2023, compared with the previous year, according to data released by Kaspersky, a global cybersecurity company.

Feb. 20: On the eve of the 'World Day of Social Justice' Pakistan launched the National Coalition for Social Justice, reinforcing the recognition that all women and men have the right to pursue their material well-being and spiritual development in conditions of freedom, security, equity and human dignity.

Feb. 21: Senior journalist and columnist Nazir Naji passed away.

Feb. 23: The Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCoE) approved the government plan to construct the 80km segment of pipeline inside Pakistan under the much-delayed Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas line project in the first phase.

Feb. 23: Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the state-of-the-art school named 'Tahafuz Daras Gah' to provide education and residence facility to the transgender children, in Lahore.

Feb. 23: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Ahmed Irfan Aslam made a "strong case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague for ending Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories."

HDI Decline

The latest Human Development Report from the UNDP presents a bleak global outlook, characterised by deepening inequalities and political polarisation. The report underscores the urgent need for collective action to navigate through these tumultuous times. Pakistan's position in this global scenario is particularly concerning. Its descent from the 161st to the 164th position in the Human Development Index should serve as cause for deep introspection. This setback is a reflection of not just local but also global gridlocks that hinder the advancement towards equitable development. In the face of increasing inequalities, the report reveals a concerning trend of reversing progress in bridging the gap between wealthy and poorer nations. For Pakistan,

the decline in the HDI ranking is attributed to a combination of social, economic and political pressures, including macroeconomic challenges and the after-effects of the devastating floods of 2022. Pakistan's unchanged ranks in the Gender Inequality Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index highlight enduring social disparities, necessitating focused and sustainable interventions.

The report underscores the critical need for global cooperation in addressing these inequalities, with an emphasis on climate stability and fair technology access as key areas for action.

For Pakistan, this means prioritising climate and Sustainable Development Goals financing and enhancing governance to provide global public goods

efficiently. The challenges ahead demand innovative solutions and a commitment to overcoming not only local but also global hurdles to development. The report's call for new financial mechanisms and governance approaches offers a pathway for Pakistan to not only improve its HDI ranking but also contribute to a more equitable world. As Pakistan embarks on this journey, it is imperative that the new government focuses on systemic change, leveraging global cooperation to address the root causes of inequality and polarisation. By aligning with global efforts and prioritising sustainable development and equity, Pakistan can make significant strides towards a brighter, more equitable future for all.

NEW MINISTERS AND THEIR PORTFOLIOS



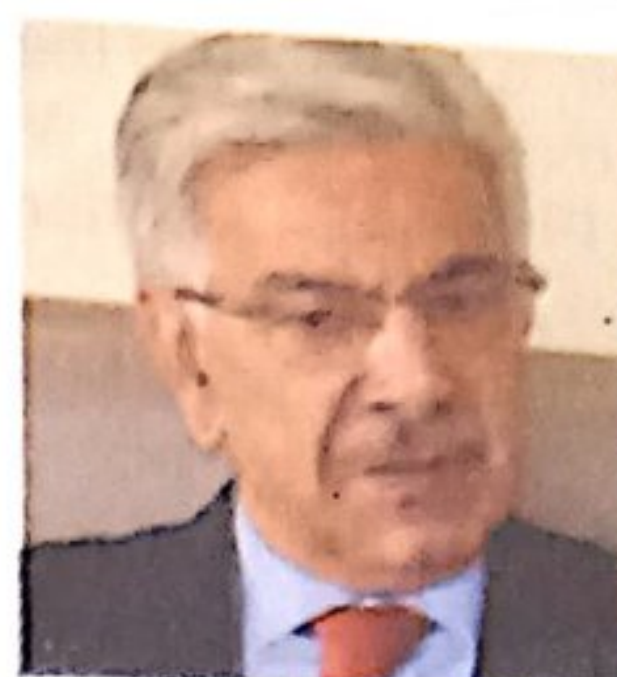
FOREIGN Minister
Ishaq Dar



INTERIOR Minister
Mohsin Naqvi



FINANCE Minister
Muhammad Aurangzeb



DEFENCE Minister
Khawaja Asif



PLANNING Minister
Ahsan Iqbal



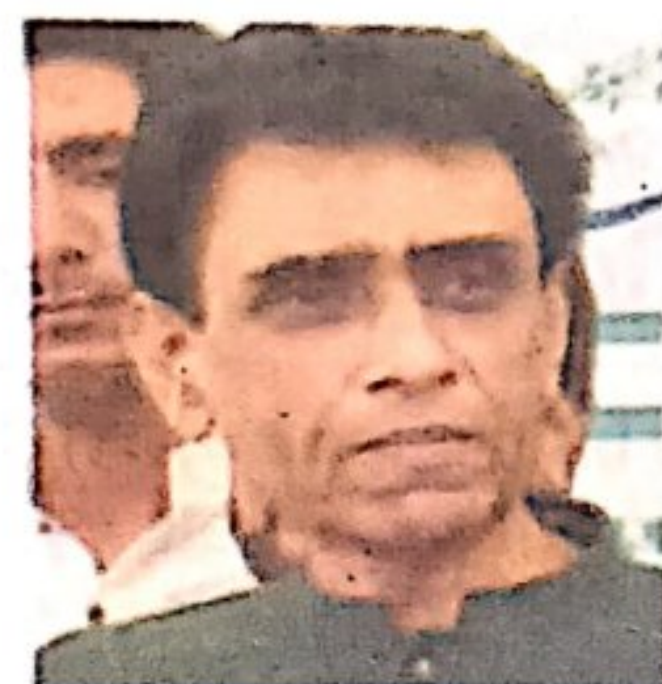
LAW & Justice Minister
Nazeer Tarar



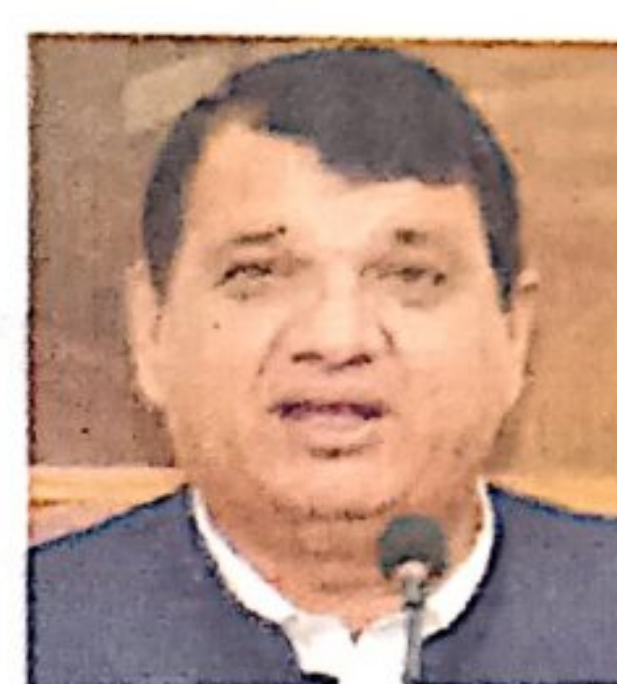
INFORMATION Minister
Attaullah Tarar



RAILWAYS Minister
Awais Leghari



SCIENCE Minister
Maqbool Siddiqui



STATES & Frontier Regions
Amir Muqam



PETROLEUM Minister
Musadik Malik



INDUSTRIES Minister
Rana Tanveer Hussain



ECONOMIC Affairs Minister
Ahad Cheema



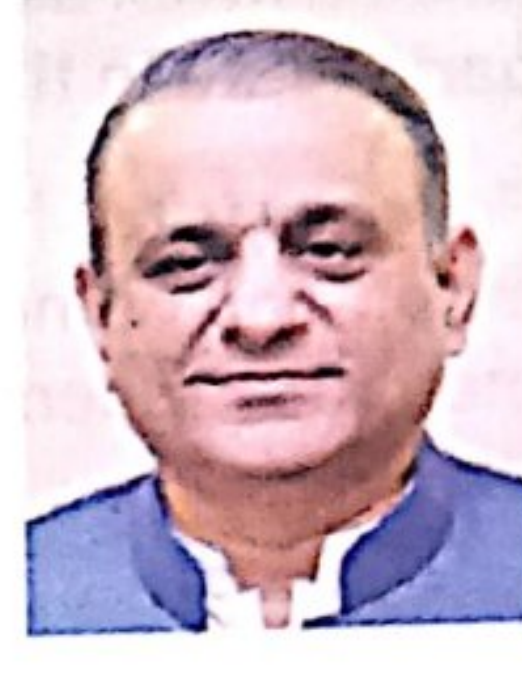
MARITIME Affairs Minister
Qaiser Sheikh



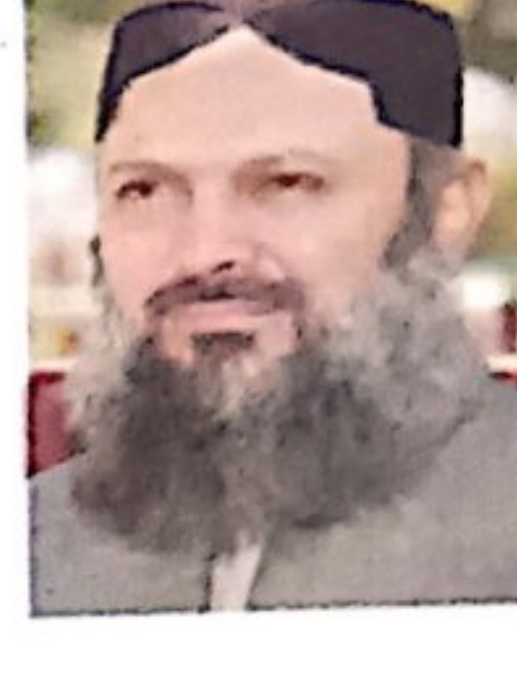
HOUSING Minister
Riaz Pirzada



OVERSEAS Pakistanis
Salik Hussain



PRIVATISATION Minister
Aleem Khan



COMMERCE Minister
Jam Kamal Khan



SHAZA
Fatima Khawaja

Feb. 23: The federal government appointed Arshad Ali Jadoon as Chairman of Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) for a period of three years.

Feb. 23: The federal government appointed British Pakistani Syed Tariq Mahmood-ul-Hassan as the Managing Director (MD) of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) for a period of two years.

Feb. 23: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) recommended the elevation of CJ of BHC Naeem Akhtar Afghan to Supreme Court as a judge.

Feb. 23: Pakistan's experienced cueist Awais Ullah Munir lost to Iran's Ali Gharahgozlu in the final of the ACBS Asian Men's Snooker Championship 2024.

Feb. 24: Ahmad Nael Qureshi won the ITF Pakistan Zainab Ali Naqvi Memorial World Junior Championship Leg-II.

Feb. 25: The caretaker government not only terminated the contract for the much-awaited 306km Hyderabad-Sukkur (M-6) Motorway but also escalated the project's cost by over 100 percent.

Feb. 25: Zain Mahmood Chaudhry emerged as the new champion of the 19th Cholisthan Jeep Rally at Derwar.

Feb. 25: Ichhra (Lahore) police rescued a woman a few minutes after she was surrounded by an enraged mob who wanted to punish her for allegedly wearing a dress adorned with what they thought were holy verses.

Feb. 25: Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Munir Akram was included in the 14 most influential diplomats of the world organization.

Feb. 25: Pakistan lost the blind cricket series to India.

Feb. 26: The Punjab Assembly elected Maryam Nawaz as the first-ever woman chief minister of Punjab.

Feb. 26: Syed Murad Ali Shah was elected as the Sindh chief minister for the third time.

Feb. 26: The federal caretaker cabinet approved Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline project.

Feb. 26: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the GSM Association (GSMA) formalized two cooperation agreements namely, the Digital Cooperation Agreement & Centre of Excellence.

Feb. 26: Saad Ahmad Warraich officially took charge as the Charge d'Affaires at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

Feb. 27: Pakistan Army shot down an Indian spy quadcopter that intruded into the country's airspace along the Line of Control (LoC).

Feb. 27: Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief, Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, was awarded King Abdul Aziz Badge of Honour of the Excellent Class by Chief of the General Staff, Saudi Armed Forces.

Feb. 27: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar approved new guiding principles to finalize nominations for the Pakistan Awards 2024.

Feb. 27: The Embryology Lab, Department of Theriogenology of the University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences (UVAS) birthed first Holstein Friesian (HF) calf by using In Vitro

GK CORNER

Planet Mars

Mars – the fourth planet from the Sun – is a dusty, cold, desert world with a very thin atmosphere. It is frequently called the "Red Planet" because iron minerals in the Martian dirt oxidize, or rust, causing the surface to look red. It's made of iron, nickel and sulphur.

With a radius of 2,106 miles (3,390 kilometers), Mars is about half the size of Earth.

As Mars orbits the Sun, it completes one rotation every 24.6 hours, which is very similar to one day on Earth (23.9 hours).

Mars has two small moons, Phobos and Deimos. Phobos is the innermost and larger moon.

It has a large canyon system called Valles Marineris.

Mars is home to the largest volcano in the solar system, Olympus Mons. It's three times taller than Earth's Mt. Everest.

Mars has a thin atmosphere made up mostly of carbon dioxide, nitrogen and argon gases.

The temperature on Mars can be as high as 70 degrees Fahrenheit (20 degrees Celsius) or as low as about -225 degrees Fahrenheit (-153 degrees Celsius). And because the atmosphere is so thin, heat from the Sun easily escapes this planet.

Embryo Production (IVEP) at the Training and Research Demonstration Farm (TRDF), Ravi Campus, Pattoki.

Feb. 28: Outgoing National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf inaugurated Yadgar-i-Dastoor (Constitution Monument) and Bagh-i-Dastoor in front of Parliament House.

Feb. 29: The inaugural session of the 16th National Assembly was held during which Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf administered oath to the newly-elected MNAs.

Feb. 29: The federal government lifted the restriction on foreign visits of all the federal government officials and officers of attached departments and autonomous bodies.

Feb. 29: The federal government appointed Niaz Muhammad Khan the Director General of Civil Defence.

Mar. 01: The NA elected PMLN leader Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and PPP's Ghulam Mustafa Shah as Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively.

Mar. 01: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) sentenced federal capital's Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon, Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Jameel Zafar and Station House Officer (SHO) Nasir Manzoor of Margalla Police Station for contempt of court. The court, however, suspended the sentences for 30 days to allow the convicts to file an intra-court appeal with a division bench.

Mar. 01: PPP candidate Mir Sarfraz Bugti was elected unopposed as the Balochistan Chief Minister.

Mar. 01: PTI's provincial president Ali Amin Gandapur, an

independent member of the KP Assembly backed by Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), was elected as the chief minister of the province.

Mar. 03: Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the country's 24th prime minister

Mar. 03: Renowned singer Dr Amjad Pervaiz passed away. He was 79.

Mar. 03: The annual meeting of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) elected Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani as President, Sarmad Ali as Secretary General, Imtihan Shahid as Senior Vice President, Muhammad Aslam Kazi as Vice President, Syed Muhammad Munir Jilani as Joint Secretary and Shahab Zuberi as Finance Secretary of the Society.

Mar. 03: Ahmed Baig won the 10th J. A. Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship.

Mar. 04: Asad Rehman Gilani (PAS) was appointed Secretary to the prime minister.

Mar. 04: Captain (R) Khurram Agha was posted as Federal Secretary Commerce Division.

Mar. 04: The ECP rejected the plea of SIC for allocation of reserved seats in the NA and provincial legislatures.

Mar. 04: Two Pakistani businesswomen – Unilever Pakistan CEO Shazia Syed and

PureHealth cofounder Shaista Asif – were recognised by Forbes in its '100 Most Powerful Businesswomen 2024' list.

Mar. 04: Nooh Dastgir Butt smashed two national records to help Wapda win the 20th Men's National Classic Powerlifting and Bench Press Championship title.

Mar. 05: Pakistan's potato production leaped to ninth in the

Exercise Steadfast Defender 2024

It is a military exercise launched by NATO, which includes military operations in land, air, sea, cyber, and space.

► **Significance:** Largest exercise conducted by the NATO since the Cold War.

► **Participants:** Over 90,000 troops from 31 NATO allies as well as special invitee Sweden will participate in the exercise.

► **Purpose:** To highlight NATO's collective military might and commitment to the security of its members, seemingly in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



February 24, 1739

The Battle of Karnal was fought.

The army of Iranian ruler Nadir Shah defeated the forces of the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah.

March 18, 1919

The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, popularly known as the Rowlatt Act, was passed by the Imperial Legislative Council in Delhi on March 18, 1919.

It indefinitely extended the emergency measures of preventive indefinite detention, imprisonment without trial and judicial review enacted in the Defence of India Act 1915 during the First World War.

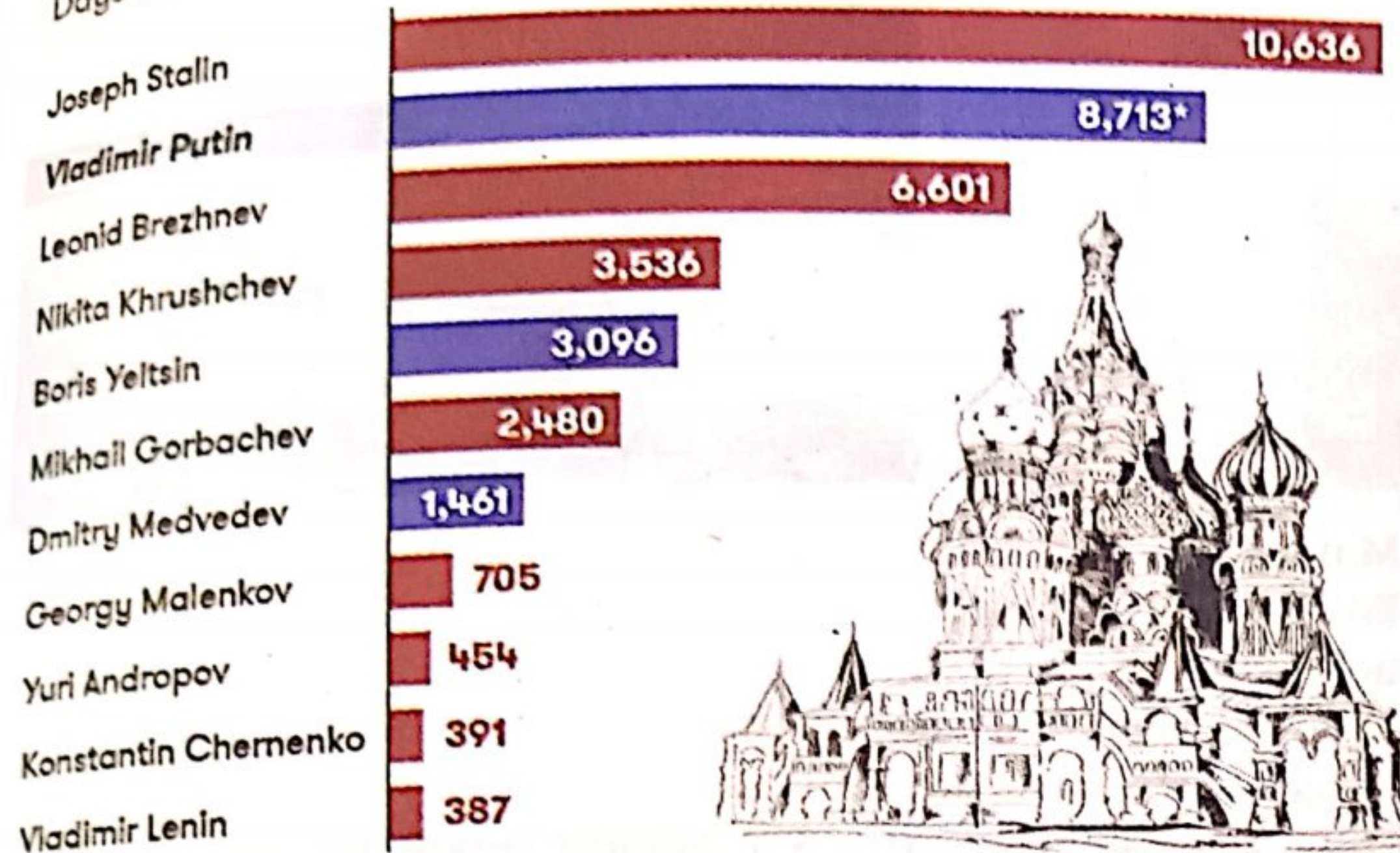
March 17, 1958

The United States launched Vanguard 1, the first satellite to have solar electric power.

GK CORNER

RUSSIAN LEADERS WITH THE LONGEST TENURE IN THE KREMLIN

Days in office of longest-serving Russian leaders in the last century



* As of March 14, 2024.
Putin's days in the office starts with his first presidential term



the women in the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) from 10 percent to 15 percent.

Mar. 08: The FBR slapped 25% Sales Tax on locally manufactured or assembled cars if invoice price exceeds Rs4 million.

Mar. 08: Punjab Governor M. Baligh-ur-Rehman administered oath to Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan as the new chief justice of the LHC.

Mar. 08: Japan awarded prestigious Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT) Research Scholarships for Masters/Doctorate degrees to eleven Pakistani students for academic year 2024-25.

Mar. 08: CM Punjab inaugurated the International Women Safety App "Never Again" to ensure the protection of the women.

Mar. 08: Pakistan's first Shariah-compliant Human Milk Bank was established at the Sindh Institute of Child Health and

Agreement on Pre-notification of Flight Testing of Ballistic Missiles

India and Pakistan signed the Pre-notification of the Flight Testing of Ballistic Missiles Agreement in 2005. This agreement aims to reduce the potential miscommunications and miscalculations between the two neighbours. It promotes predictability and transparency by mandating prior notice of ballistic missile test flights.

Key Points

- Each party must notify the other party in advance of any planned flight test of surface-to-surface ballistic missiles launched from land or sea.
- Each party shall notify the other party at least three days before the start of a five-day launch window for ballistic missile flight tests.
- Each party must issue relevant NOTAMs (Notice to Airmen) and NAVAREAs (Navigational Warnings for Mariners) via their respective authorities.
- Bilateral pre-notification must be sent through the respective Foreign Offices and High Commissions, using the format attached to the Agreement.
- Test launch sites must not be within 40 kilometres of the International Boundary or the Line of Control, and projected impact locations must not be within 75 kilometres of these boundaries.
- Ballistic missiles' projected trajectory must not cross the International Boundary or the Line of Control, and a horizontal distance of at least 40 kilometres is required from these limits.
- Parties must keep bilateral pre-notification confidential unless otherwise agreed.
- The Parties shall conduct discussions annually or as mutually agreed upon to examine the implementation of this Agreement and consider modifications.
- A party may withdraw from the agreement by giving the other party six months' written notice.

April 7, 1948

The WHO was established

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations.

It is Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland



March 22

World Water Day is an annual United Nations (UN) observance day held on 22 March since 1993.

It emphasises on SDG 6, which calls for water and sanitation for all by 2030.

UN-Water is the convener for World Water Day.

Theme for 2023 is accelerating change.



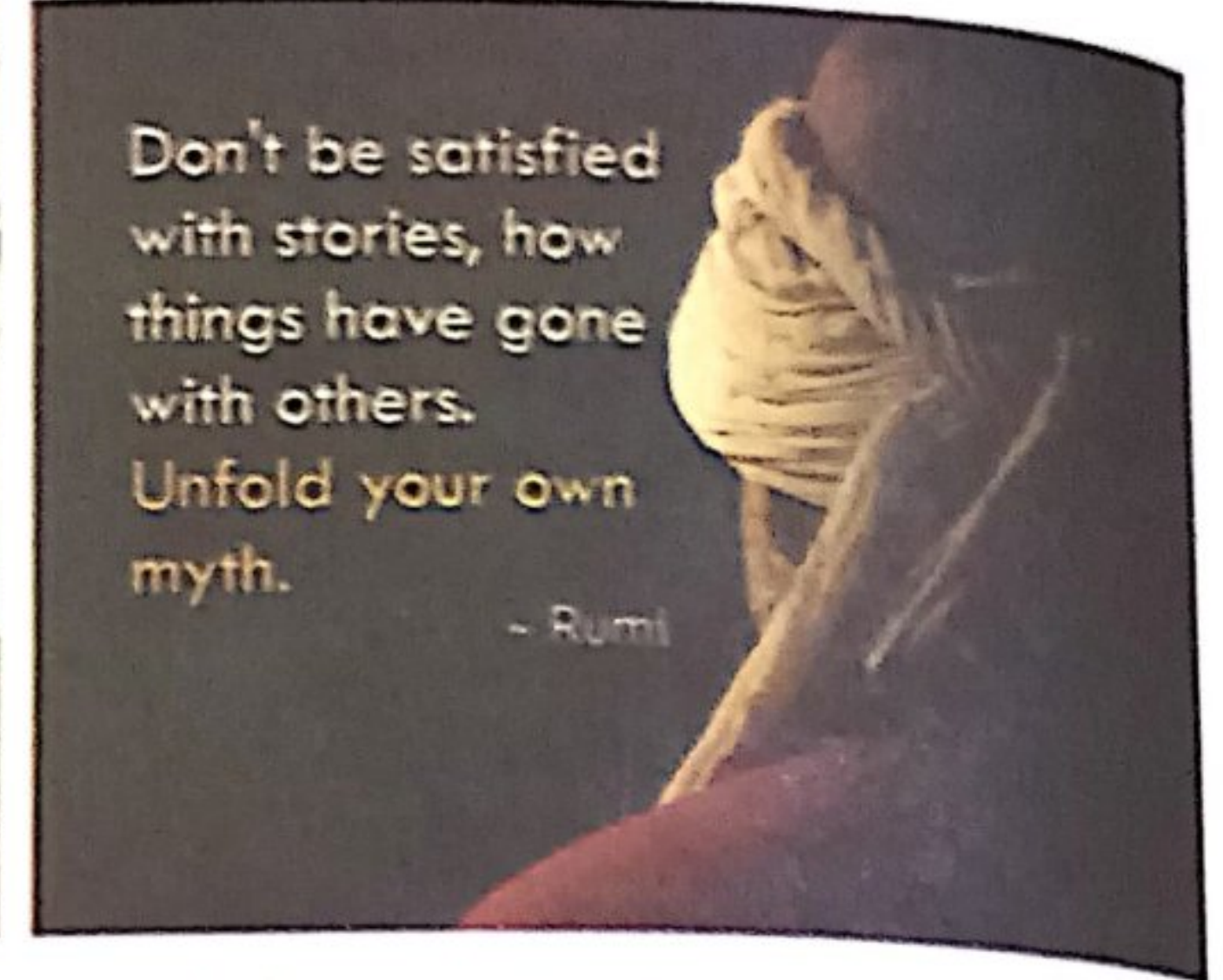
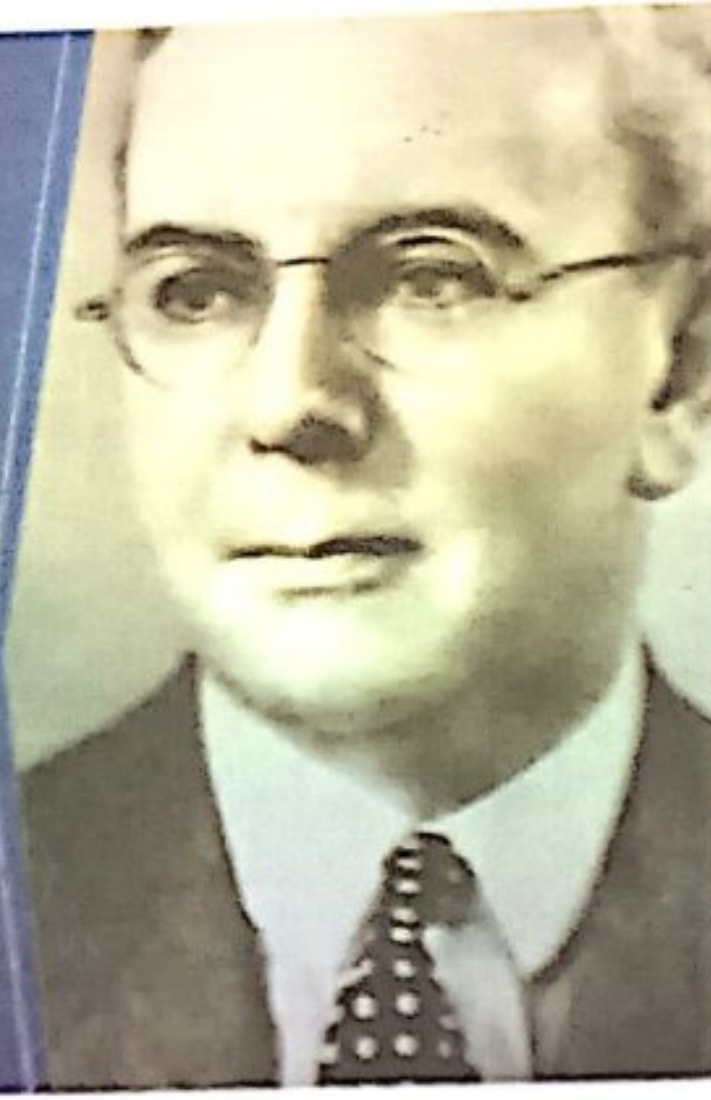
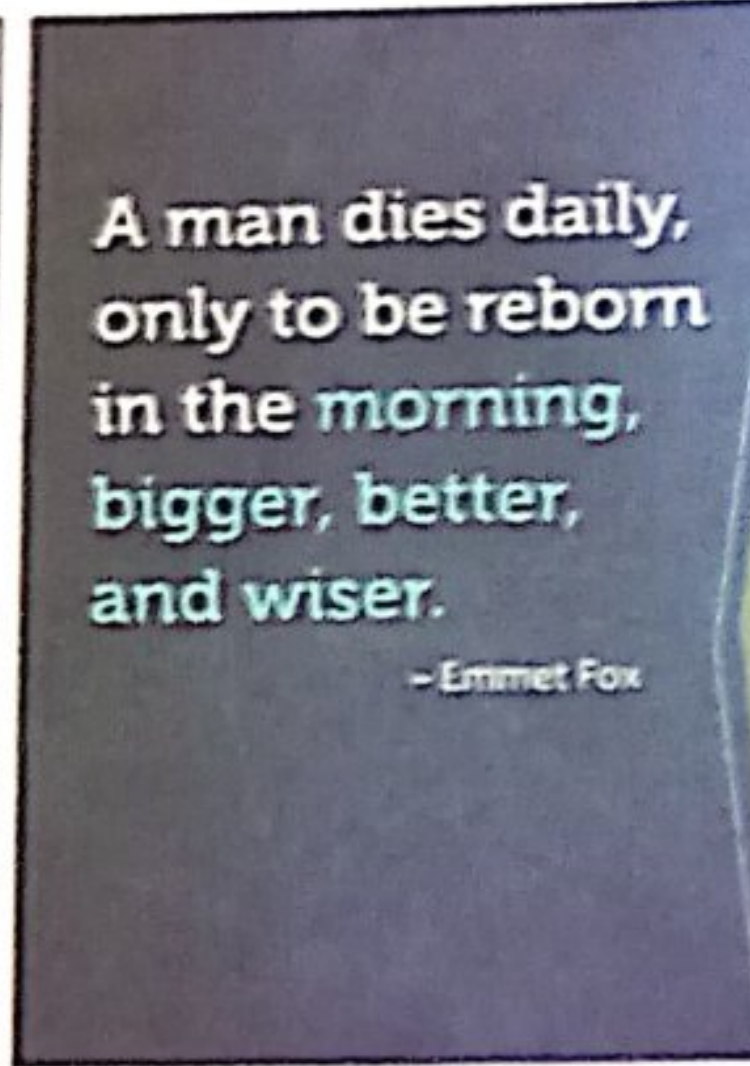
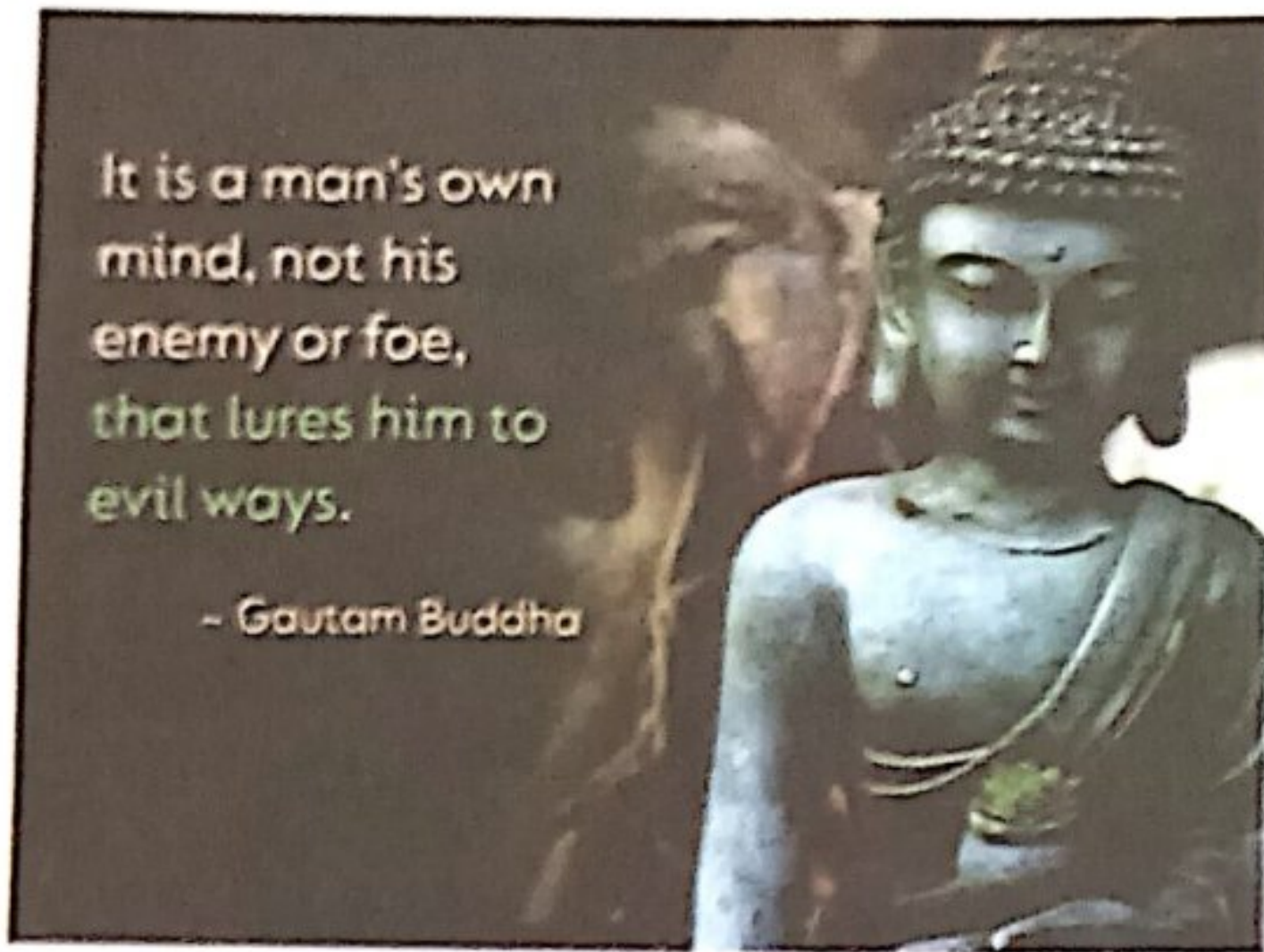
April 15, 1994

The Marrakesh Agreement was signed in Marrakesh, Morocco at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations. It established the World Trade Organization (WTO), which officially came into being on 1 January 1995.





GK CORNER



Neonatology (SICHN) in Karachi.

Mar. 08: Pakistan Navy's key maritime exercise Seaspark-24 concluded in Karachi.

Mar. 08: Army won the 31st National Shooting Championship.

Mar. 08: Wapda emerged as the National Kabaddi champions.

Mar. 08: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) launched a new Islamic equity index - the Mahaana Islamic Index (MII30).

Mar. 09: PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the country's 14th president - the only civilian president to be elected for a historic second time.

Mar. 09: Shah Faisal Utmankhel was appointed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Advocate General.

Mar. 11: Former Supreme Court judge Justice (R) Zia Mehmood Mirza passed away.

Mar. 12: Syed Asif Hyder Shah, who was earlier serving in the federal government, was posted as the new Sindh chief secretary.

Mar. 13: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (PMSS) constituted a seven-member committee to present a practical plan for reduction in government expenditures.

Mar. 13: Pakistan ranked 161st on a list of 191 countries on the UN Human Development Index, scoring 0.544 points, a slight improvement from 2023, when Pakistan was ranked 164th with 0.540 points.

Mar. 13: Pir Muhammad Afzal Qadri, the founder of Tehreek-i-Labbaik Ya Rasul Allah (TLY) and Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), died.

Mar. 13: The NA passed a resolution demanding overturning of the verdict in the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto case, citing it as a grave miscarriage of justice.

Mar. 13: PMSS approved changes to the policy to confer Pakistan Civil Awards on civilians for their outstanding achievements in their respective fields.

Mar. 13: Pakistan Baitul Mal MD Tariq Mehmoodul Hasan resigned from his post.

Mar. 14: Elections for six vacant seats in the Senate of Pakistan was held in which PPP secured four seats, one went to PMLN and the sixth to JUI-F.

Mar. 14: Alizey Khan, the founder of Ruhil Foundation, became the first Pakistani woman to have been awarded the Diana Legacy Award.

Mar. 15: The NA extended seven ordinances which were promulgated by the caretaker regime to meet conditions of the IMF.

Mar. 15: Pakistan Railways (PR) ran the longest freight train (2,500-foot long and containing 50 wagons operated by a powerful engine) of its history. The train successfully transported over 3,000 tons of cargo from Karachi to Kotri. The train, though capable of reaching 60 kilometers per hour, maintained an average speed of 38 kilometers per hour throughout the journey. This powerful freight train can haul cargo equivalent to over 94 22-wheeler trucks, significantly reducing traffic congestion and environmental impact on roads.

Mar. 15: Doctors at Karachi's Jinnah Hospital achieved a major breakthrough by conducting robotic surgery to treat diabetes and obesity.

Mar. 15: Pakistan's rising golf star Ahmad Baig won the Lexus Challenge 2024 - an Asian Development Tour (ADT) event.

WHO IS RACHEL CORRIE?

- Rachel Corrie, who was born in 1979 in the US state of Washington, was a volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement
- Showing her belief in peace, Corrie went to Gaza in 2003 in solidarity with the Palestinian cause
- Corrie's activities in the Palestinian territory and the footage she captured exposed Israel's human rights violations
- On March 16, 2003, while trying to stop the demolition of Palestinian homes in Rafah, she was crushed to death by an armored Israeli military bulldozer
- Palestinians declared her a "martyr" and held a massive funeral procession in her honor
- A lawsuit filed by Corrie's family in Israel was dismissed by the country's Supreme Court, and no one was held accountable for her death



REMEMBERED THROUGH THE DECADES

- Numerous films, plays, and books have been made in memory of Rachel Corrie, whose name has been given to schools, hospitals, and newborns in Palestine
- Letters that Corrie wrote to her family from Palestine were compiled and published in a book titled *Let Me Stand Alone*
- Today, Rachel Corrie's legacy resonates worldwide as a beacon of compassion and altruism



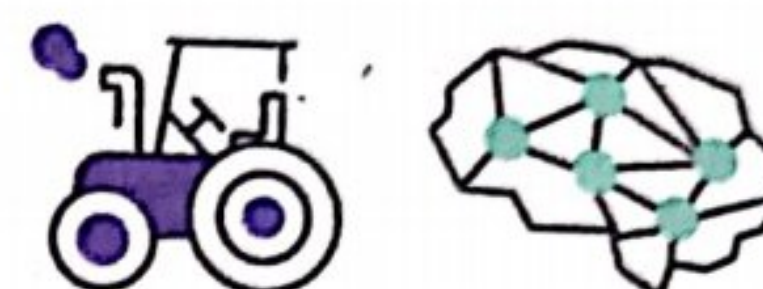
INTERNATIONAL

- Feb. 16:** The Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny — a vocal critic of President Vladimir Putin — died.
- Feb. 16:** Ukraine signed a security deal with Germany.
- Feb. 16:** Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron signed a security pact calling for French military and civilian aid for Kyiv in its war against Russia.
- Feb. 16:** Vanessa Dounac, the longest-serving foreign correspondent in India, was expelled for alleged concerns over her reporting.
- Feb. 16:** Greek lawmakers voted to allow same-sex civil marriages.
- Feb. 17:** Japan's space agency JAXA toasted a successful blast-off for its new flagship rocket H3.
- Feb. 17:** Iran unveiled new weaponry including what it said was the locally made Arman anti-ballistic missile system and the Azarakhsh low-altitude air defense system.
- Feb. 18:** Russia took full control of the Ukrainian town of Avdiivka after Ukraine withdrew — the former's biggest gain since capturing the city of Bakhmut in May 2023.
- Feb. 19:** The European Union formally launched a naval mission 'Aspides' to protect Red Sea shipping from Yemen's Houthi rebels.
- Feb. 20:** The United States again vetoed a draft United Nations Security Council resolution on the Israel-Hamas war, blocking a demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.
- Feb. 20:** German World Cup winner Andreas Brehme died at the age of 63.
- Feb. 20:** Australia announced to boost its defence spending by an additional AUS\$11.1 billion (\$7.25 billion) over the next decade.
- Feb. 20:** Ameen Sayani, the iconic radio presenter of the popular show "Binaca Geet Mala", passed away. He was 91.
- Feb. 21:** An eight-year-old Ashwath Kaushik became the youngest player to defeat a grandmaster in classical chess.
- Feb. 22:** In a first ruling of its kind, a Canadian judge said that a white nationalist who deliberately ran over and killed four members of a Muslim family in 2021 had committed terrorism.
- Feb. 22:** China's AVIC displayed its Z-10 attack helicopter for the first time outside its home country at the Singapore Airshow.
- Feb. 23:** The US imposed extensive sanctions against Russia, targeting more than 500 people and entities to mark the second anniversary of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and retaliate for the

- death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.
- Feb. 23:** China launched the 11th satellite under a classified Chinese military programme with the country's most powerful rocket 'Long March 5'.
- Feb. 23:** A spacecraft built and flown by Texas-based company Intuitive Machines landed near the moon's south pole, the first US touchdown on the lunar surface in more than half a century and the first ever achieved by the private sector.
- Feb. 23:** Denmark became the latest Nato member to sign a 10-year agreement on security cooperation with Ukraine.
- Feb. 23:** Germany's Bundestag passed a law allowing individuals and voluntary associations to grow and hold limited quantities of

Which Jobs Have a Future?

Jobs forecast to grow the most worldwide between 2023 and 2027*



Jobs with the largest employment gains*

1. Agricultural equipment operators
2. Heavy truck and bus drivers
3. Vocational education teachers
4. Mechanics and machinery repairers
5. Business development professionals
6. Building frame and related trades workers
7. University and higher education teachers
8. Electrotechnology engineers

Fastest-growing jobs**

1. AI and Machine Learning specialists
2. Sustainability specialists
3. Business intelligence analysts
4. Information security analysts
5. FinTech engineers
6. Data analysts and scientists
7. Robotics engineers
8. Agricultural equipment operators

* Based on absolute increase in jobs between 2023 and 2027

** Based on relative increase in number of jobs between 2023 and 2027

cannabis.

Feb. 23: Australia defeated New Zealand in the second Twenty20 international to clinch the three-match series.

Feb. 23: The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) dropped the UAE from its 'grey list' of around two-dozen nations considered risky.

Feb. 24: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) announced to lift strict sanctions on Niger.

Feb. 24: The leaders of Canada and Italy signed security agreements with Ukraine.

Feb. 24: Egypt signed a deal with the UAE to develop a prime stretch of its Mediterranean coast.

Feb. 25: Canada's Christopher Morales Williams raced to a world indoor record in the 400 metres at the NCAA's Southeastern Conference championships.

Feb. 25: An extraordinary session of the information ministers of the member states of the OIC was held in Istanbul.

Feb. 25: India's Assam state scrapped an 89-year-old law that allowed marriage involving underage Muslims.

Feb. 25: Liverpool beat Chelsea in the League Cup final to clinch a record-extending 10th title in the competition.

Feb. 25: Chinese technology company Honor globally launched its new Magic 6 Pro smartphone and showcased an experimental eye-tracking AI function that enables users to remotely open and move their car just by looking at their phone screen.

Feb. 25: The director general of the World Trade Organisation, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, launched a \$50 million fund to help female entrepreneurs in developing countries.

Feb. 26: India took an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match test series against England.

Player of the Match: Imad Wasim

Player of the Tournament: Shadab Khan

Emerging Player of the Tournament: Irfan Khan Niazi

Best Batter of the Tournament: Usman Khan

Best Bowler of the Tournament: Usama Mir

Best Fielder of the Tournament: Irfan Khan Niazi

Super All-Rounder of the Tournament: Saim Ayub

Wicketkeeper of the Tournament: Azam Khan

Fazal Mahmood Cap for Most Wickets: Usama Mir

Hanif Mohammad Cap for Most Runs: Babar Azam

Spirit of Cricket Award: Peshawar Zalmi

Best Umpire of the Tournament: Asif Yaqoob



GK CORNER

Feb. 26: Hungary's parliament approved Sweden's Nato accession, clearing the last hurdle before the historic step by the Nordic country.

Feb. 26: Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh announced his resignation.

Feb. 26: Veteran Indian Ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas passed away at 73.

Feb. 27: India introduced four crew members for its maiden 'Gaganyaan' space voyage, as it aims to become the world's fourth country to send a crewed mission into space.

Feb. 28: The International Criminal Court judges ruled that nearly 50,000 victims of Ugandan militia commander Dominic Ongwen should get a total of over 52 million euros (\$56 million) in compensation.

Feb. 29: Chinese lawmakers expanded Beijing's state secrets law for the first time since 2010, widening the scope of restricted sensitive information to "work secrets".

Feb. 29: United Nations troops of peacekeeping force MONUSCO began their gradual withdrawal from restive eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mar. 01: Former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney, who made his political mark in the 1980s with the signing of NAFTA with the United States that later expanded to include Mexico, died. He was 84.

Mar. 01: Iranians voted for a new parliament.

Mar. 01: Updated estimates from the World Health Organisation and an international group of researchers suggest that more than a billion people globally are now considered obese.

Mar. 01: Veteran left-wing political maverick George Galloway was elected as the new lawmaker for the English town of Rochdale.

Mar. 01: South African batter Rilee Rossouw became the first player to win 50 matches in the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

Mar. 01: Ireland claimed their first test victory when they beat fellow minnows Afghanistan by six wickets.

Mar. 01: Japanese manga comic creator Alkira Toriyama, best

known for his Dragon Ball series that spawned widely popular films, video games and TV shows, died. He was 68.

Mar. 02: US President Joe Biden signed into law a short-term stopgap spending bill to avert a partial government shutdown.

Mar. 02: Yang Siqi, a 14-year-old from China, became the first surfer from her country and the youngest person to qualify for the sport at the Olympics.

Mar. 03: Canada announced a fresh round of sanctions against Russia over the death of opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Mar. 03: Alex de Minaur successfully defended his Mexican Open crown.

Mar. 03: Dutch runner Femke Bol rewrote her own world record in the indoor 400 metres when she clocked 49.17 seconds and beat the previous mark of 49.24 she set two weeks ago at the Dutch national championships.

Mar. 04: South Korean and US militaries kicked off their spring drills – The Freedom Shield – with twice the number of troops joining compared to last year.

Mar. 04: The US Supreme Court ruled in favour of former president Donald Trump, overturning a prior judicial decision that had barred him from Colorado's ballot.

Mar. 04: In a world first, France enshrined the right to abortion in its constitution.

Mar. 04: Nato member Albania, which has no fighter jets of its own, opened a rebuilt Soviet-era air base – Kucova Air Base – to serve Nato aircraft.

Mar. 05: The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for top Russian commanders Sergei Kobylash and Viktor Sokolov for suspected war crimes in Ukraine.

Mar. 05: China announced to boost its defence spending by 7.2 percent this year, fuelling a military budget that has more than doubled under President Xi Jinping's 11 years in office. China also officially adopted tougher language against Taiwan as it released the budget figures, dropping the mention of "peaceful reunification" in a

Oppenheimer reigns supreme again

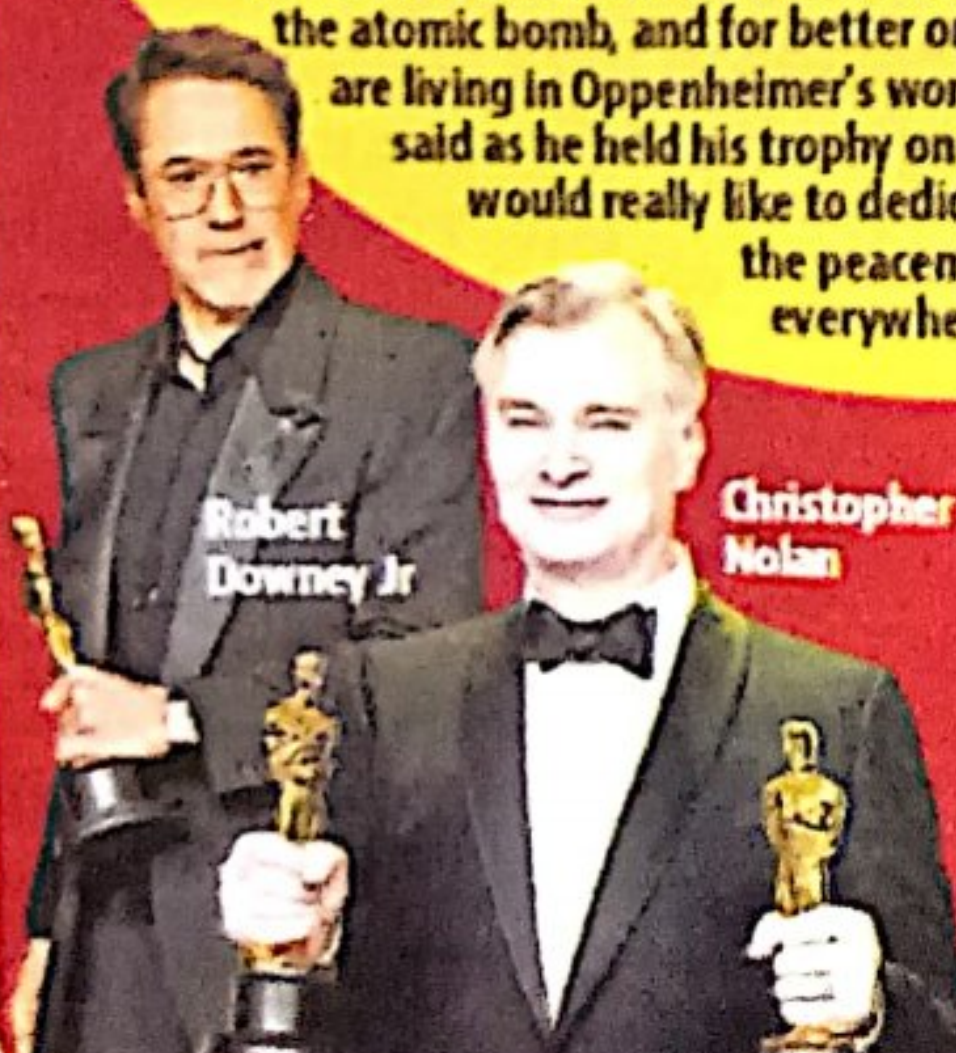
Oppenheimer, the blockbuster biopic about the race to build the first atomic bomb, claimed the most important trophies on as Hollywood celebrated a triumphant year in film.

Seven wins for Oppenheimer

Apart from Best Picture, Cillian Murphy won best actor for playing theoretical physicist J Robert Oppenheimer, leader of the US effort in the 1940s to create a weapon that ended World War Two. Christopher Nolan took home the directing Oscar. Robert Downey Jr won best supporting actor for his portrayal of Rear Adm Lewis Strauss, hailed as one of his best performances in years



"We made a film about the man who created the atomic bomb, and for better or worse we are living in Oppenheimer's world," Murphy said as he held his trophy on stage. "So I would really like to dedicate this to the peacemakers everywhere."



First win for AP, PBS

The documentary feature award about Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It was the first ever Oscar awarded to a Ukrainian filmmaker. The feature was a joint production of The Associated Press and PBS' Frontline

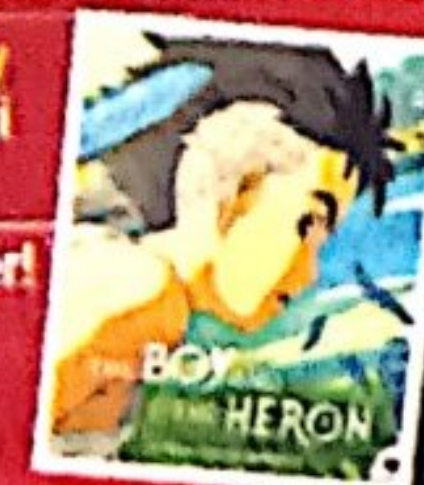
Best actress for Emma Stone

For playing a woman revived from the dead in the dark and wacky comedy *Poor Things*. It was the second Academy Award for Stone, who landed the best actress honor for 2016 musical *La La Land*. The best actress race was considered one of the tightest competitions with Lily Gladstone nominated for *Killers of the Flower Moon*. Had she prevailed, Gladstone would have been the first Native American to win an acting Oscar



Winners in other categories

- Actress in a Supporting Role: Da'Vine Joy Randolph: *The Holdovers*
- Live Action Short Film: *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar*; Wes Anderson and Steven Rales
- International Feature Film: *The Zone of Interest* (UK)
- Animated Feature Film: *The Boy and the Heron*; Hayao Miyazaki and Toshio Suzuki
- Animated Short Film: *War Is Over!* Inspired by the Music of John & Yoko; Dave Mullins and Brad Booker



Strike-slimmed slate

The coming months at box office likely offer less to cheer about, with strikes by actors and writers last year having forced filming and post-production to shut down for months, leaving gaps in this year's movie schedule

Conflict plays a role

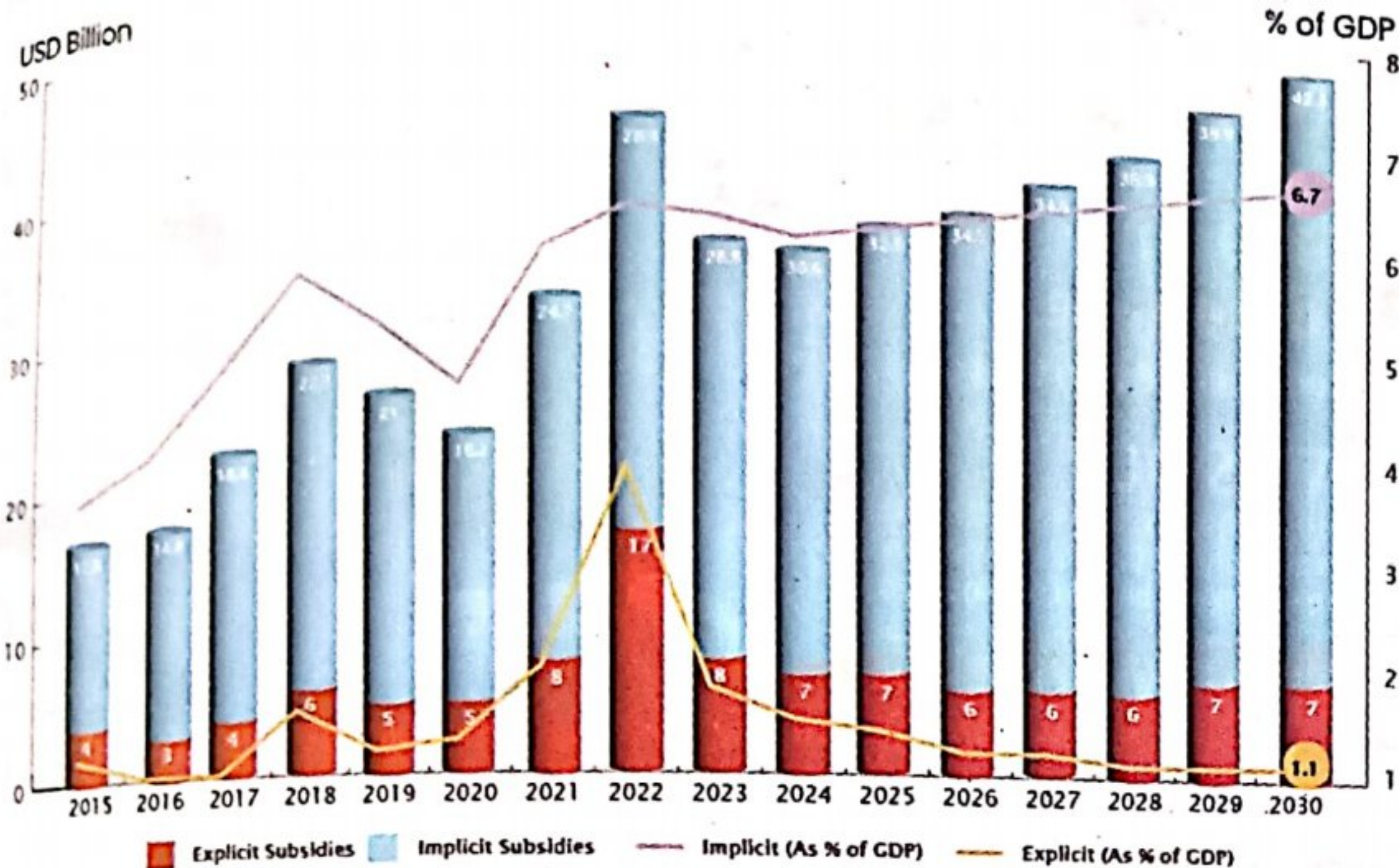
A handful of celebrities, including Eilish, Mahershala Ali and Mark Ruffalo, wore red pins calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Outside, hundreds of pro-Palestinian protesters shouted and slowed traffic in the streets near the Dolby Theatre.



Pakistan's Fossil Fuel Subsidies Amount to USD 36 Billion

Explicit and implicit fossil fuel subsidies (2015-2030)

Pakistan spent around 7.6% of GDP on fossil fuel subsidies in 2024, whereas explicit subsidies are almost equivalent to its spend on education



government report delivered by Premier Li Qiang at the opening of the National People's Congress (NPC).

Mar. 05: Top EU officials unveiled plans to boost the continent's arms industry – the proposal involves spending 1.5 billion euros to give countries incentives to buy jointly from European firms and encourage industry to raise capacity and develop new technologies.

Mar. 05: Jeff Bezos reclaimed the title of the richest person on Earth, surpassing Elon Musk.

Mar. 05: Hungary's President Tamas Sulyok signed the bill that approved Sweden's accession to the Nato military alliance.

Mar. 05: The Maldives signed a 'military assistance' deal with China.

Mar. 06: Mumbai Indians' Shabnim Ismail bowled the fastest delivery in women's cricket with a 132.1kph ball.

Mar. 06: Russia's financial monitoring agency, Rosfinmonitoring,

added former world chess champion Garry Kasparov, a prominent critic of the Kremlin, to its list of "terrorists and extremists".

Mar. 06: US President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump swept to victory in statewide nominating contests across the country on Super Tuesday.

Mar. 06: Nikki Haley ended her long-shot challenge to Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump.

Mar. 07: Sweden formally joined Nato when Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson handed over the final documentation to the US government.

Mar. 07: President Joe Biden ordered the US military to set up a port in Gaza to get more humanitarian aid into the beleaguered territory by sea.

Mar. 08: A jury in New York found former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernandez guilty of trafficking hundreds of tons of cocaine into the United States.

Mar. 08: The mother-in-law of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Sudha Murthy, was appointed to serve in the upper house of India's parliament, i.e. Rajya Sabha.

Mar. 09: India bulldozed England in the final Test to complete a 4-1 series victory.

Mar. 09: A dual referendum in Ireland on redefining family and women's roles in the constitution was defeated.

Mar. 10: India and the four-member European trade bloc EFTA, including Norway and Switzerland, signed a \$100 billion India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).

Mar. 10: Arun Goel, the second-highest official in India's election commission, resigned abruptly.

Mar. 11: India successfully test-fired Agni-5 missile with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology – a ballistic missile capable of carrying multiple nuclear warheads.

Mar. 11: Narendra Modi-led far-right Hindu nationalist BJP government announced rules to implement the "anti-Muslim" Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019.

Mar. 11: "Oppenheimer," the blockbuster biopic about the race to build the first atomic bomb, claimed seven Academy Awards including the prestigious best picture trophy.

Mar. 11: China's parliament revised a law to effectively grant the Communist Party more executive control over China's cabinet, the State Council.

Mar. 11: The US women's national team defeated Brazil to win the inaugural CONCACAF W Gold Cup.

GK Tidbits

1. Europa is an icy moon of: **Jupiter**
2. Dry ice is the solid form of: **Carbon dioxide (CO₂)**
3. The first One-Day International (ODI) was played between Australia and England in: **1971**
4. The batter who has the unique record of scoring three double centuries in ODI cricket is: **Rohit Sharma (India)**
5. The first batsman to score a double century in ODI history was: **Sachin Tendulkar**
6. Radio Pakistan began FM transmissions in the country's largest cities in: **October 1998**
7. The Durand Line was established in 1893 through an agreement between Sir Mortimer Durand, and Afghanistan's emir: **Abdur Rahman Khan**
8. The current head of the World Trade Organization (WTO) is: **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**
9. UNESCO declared the Lahore Fort a World Heritage Site in: **1981**
10. Josh Maleehabadi was born on: **Dec. 5, 1898**
11. The number of member states, the African Union, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), is: **55**
12. 'Years of Lead' was a traumatic period (from

the end of the 1960s to the 1980s) in the history of: **Italy**

13. The Paris-based intergovernmental organisation of 31 nations, International Energy Agency was founded in: **1974**

14. The real name of renowned poet and songwriter Sehba Akhtar was: **Akhtar Ali Rahmat**

15. The current Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace is: **Fauzia Viqar**

16. The fastest hockey player to reach 100 and 200 goals is: **Sohail Abbas**

17. Rached Ghannouchi is a politician from: **Tunisia**

18. The headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is located in: **Montreal (Canada)**

19. Nobel laureate poet Pablo Neruda belonged to: **Chile**

20. The capital of Chile is: **Santiago**

21. The Falkland Islands is a region disputed between the United Kingdom and: **Argentina**

22. The World Day of Social Justice is observed annually on: **20 February**

23. Intelligence Bureau was made an attached

department of the Cabinet Division in: **1948**

24. The real name of famous Urdu poet, literary columnist, critic and distinguished researcher Mushfiq Khwaja was: **Khwaja Abdul Hai**

25. "To ask that Pakistan should not be an Islamic State is asking for the impossible," was said by: **Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar**

26. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto announced Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh on: **Feb 22, 1974**

27. The current ambassador of Iran to Pakistan is: **Dr. Reza Amiri**

28. The Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline is also known as: **Peace Pipeline**

29. The current UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is: **Volker Turk**

30. Yaoundé is the capital of: **Cameroon**

31. The city known as the Switzerland of Pakistan is: **Swat**

32. UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited Pakistan in: **September 2022**

33. The language in which Mir Taqi Mir wrote his autobiography 'Zikr-i-Mir' is: **Persian**

34. Moammer Gaddafi was the president of: **Libya**

35. Dum Dum Airport, which has been renamed as

GK CORNER

Trump, Biden set for rematch

Joe Biden and rival Donald Trump each won enough delegates on Super Tuesday after primaries closed in Georgia, Mississippi, Washington and Hawaii to clinch their party nominations in the 2024 presidential race, all but assuring a rematch

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Trump's victory in Washington helped him secure the **1,215 delegates** needed to earn the Republican nomination

Biden crossed the threshold of **1,968 Democratic delegates** needed when he won Georgia

WHAT DO DELEGATES DO?

The delegates are members of party leadership and other loyalists, who will attend the national conventions (scheduled in August for Democrats and July for Republicans) where they formally select their party's presidential nominee. The election will be held on Nov 5 2024.

FIRST REMATCH IN 70 YRS

Polls show Americans are largely dreading a rematch between the two men, the first featuring two US presidents since 1912 and setting up one of the longest election campaigns in US history.

At 81, Biden is already the oldest president in history and is facing anger over his handling of immigration, inflation, and particularly the war in Israel's war against Hamas.

77-year-old Trump is facing 91 felony counts in four criminal cases involving his handling of classified documents and his attempt to overturn the 2020 election, among other crimes.

"Now we have to get back to work because we have the worst president in the history of our country -- his name is Joe Biden, sometimes referred to as crooked Joe Biden -- and he must be defeated... Our nation is failing, we're a nation that is in serious decline... we're considered almost a joke"

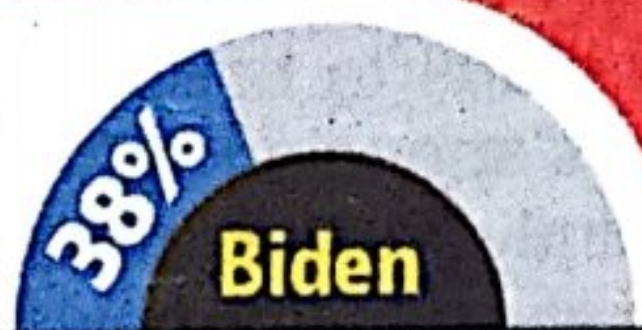
- Trump said on X



OPINION POLLS SAY...

In direct contest, Trump has an edge over Biden, a USA TODAY/Suffolk University Poll said on March 13

Trump also leads Biden in head-to-head matchups across seven swing states, according to a Bloomberg News/ Morning Consult poll taken last month



"I am honored that the broad coalition of voters representing the rich diversity of the Democratic Party across the country have put their faith in me once again to lead our party -- and our country -- in a moment when the threat Trump poses is greater than ever"

- Biden said in a statement.

Mar. 13: Paul Alexander, a paralysed Texas man who lived 70 years inside an iron lung after he survived polio as a child, died.

Mar. 13: The US House of Representatives passed a bill seeking to ban the Byte Dance-owned video application TikTok for users across the United States.

Mar. 13: Philippe de Gaulle, the eldest child of French World War II Resistance leader and first postwar president Charles de Gaulle, died aged 102.

Mar. 13: Israel launched an air strike on an aid warehouse of UNRWA in the war-ravaged Gaza.

GK Tidbits

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport, was located in the Indian city of: **Kolkata**

36. The first nuclear tests took place in the United States on: **16 July 1945**

37. The 2023 epic biographical thriller film "Oppenheimer" has been written and directed by: **Christopher Nolan**

38. The creator of the new generative artificial intelligence model "Sora" is: **OpenAI**

39. The human genome is the entire set of: **Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)**

40. The DNA consists of a double-stranded molecule built up by four bases -- adenine (A), cytosine (C), guanine (G) and: **thymine (T)**

41. Tanzania that emerged on the world map through the union of the Tanganyika and Zanzibar is: **Tanzania**

42. Bitcoin was introduced in 2009 by an anonymous creator: **Satoshi Nakamoto**

43. The site of Ganweriwala, the ancient city of the Indus Civilisation, is located in: **Cholistan desert**

44. Named Tong (Little Girl), Yhe world's first AI child that displays behaviour and capabilities similar to those of a threeor four-year-old human child has been made by: **China**

45. The mountain range in which Nanga Parbat is

located is: **Himalayas**

46. Lisbon is the capital and largest city and economic and cultural centre of: **Portugal**

47. The poetess who is often regarded as the first lady of Urdu poetry is: **Ada Jafarey**

48. Mela Chiragh is held in Lahore every year to pay tribute to: **Shah Husain**

49. Hanoi is the capital of: **Vietnam**

50. Albania joined Nato in: **2009**

51. The Albanian city that was once known as "Stalin City" is: **Kucova**

52. The Soviet Union collapsed in: **1991**

53. The country that has become the 32nd member of the Nato military alliance is: **Sweden**

54. The International Criminal Court (ICC) is based in: **The Hague**

55. Gabriel Garcia Marquez was a world-famous novelist from: **Colombia**

56. The author of The Little Mermaid and The Ugly Duckling was: **Hans Christian Andersen**

57. The MEXT research scholarship is the flagship scholarship programme of the government of: **Japan**

58. The National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) was established on: **March 10, 2000**

59. The Iraqi city traditionally believed to be the birthplace of the Prophet Abraham is: **Ur**

60. The first full moon in the month of March is known as: **The Worm Moon**

61. A moment when the sun is positioned directly above the Earth's equator is called: **Equinox**

62. There are two equinoxes named as vernal equinox and: **Autumnal equinox**

63. Another name for vernal equinox is: **Spring equinox**

64. Charles de Gaulle was a World War II Resistance leader and first postwar president of: **France**

65. A peninsula of southeastern Asia that includes Myanmar and Cambodia and Laos and Malaysia and Thailand and Vietnam is known as: **Indochina**

66. The current IG of Sindh Police is: **Ghulam Nabi Memon**

67. The British author who is often hailed as the "Queen of Crime" is: **Agatha Christie**

68. 'The Mysterious Affair at Styles' and Murder on the Orient Express were written by: **Agatha Christie**

69. Punjab Culture Day, also known as Punjabi Culture Day is celebrated on: **March 14**

70. The Cortes Generales, which consists of

GK CORNER

Great Barrier Reef (GBR)

The GBR is the world's largest coral reef system. It's located in the Coral Sea off the coast of Queensland, Australia.

The GBR stretches across 2,300 km and is made up of around 3,000 individual reefs and 900 islands.

The GBR is home to 400 types of coral, and 1,500 species of fish. It's also home to endangered species such as the dugong and the large green turtle. The GBR is a UNESCO World Heritage site and was inscribed in 1981.

In 2023, the UNESCO Heritage Committee refrained from listing Australia's Great Barrier Reef as a site "in danger" but warned that the world's biggest coral reef ecosystem remained under "serious threat" from pollution and the warming of oceans.

Widespread mass bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef was first seen in 1998 and happened again in 2002, 2016, 2017, 2020, 2022 and now in 2024.

parliamentary vote of confidence, a week after he formed his third coalition in just over a year to head a government.

Mar. 13: The European Parliament gave final approval to wide-ranging EU rules to govern artificial intelligence, including powerful systems like OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Mar. 14: Simon Stiell, who leads the United Nations climate change organisation, wrote a letter to 200 nations in which he stated that countries have a year to produce ambitious new emissions-cutting pledges to ensure the 'safety and prosperity' of people around the world.

Mar. 14: Spain's lower house passed a bill granting amnesty to all those involved in the northeastern Catalonia region's bid for independence.

Mar. 14: Britain unveiled a new definition of extremism in response to an eruption of hate crimes against Jews and Muslims since the Oct 7 Hamas attacks on Israel.

Mar. 14: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas named Mohammad Mustafa as prime minister of the Palestinian Authority.

Mar. 15: The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that stop clocks used to regulate the time taken between overs will become a permanent fixture at limited-overs internationals from June following a successful trial.

Mar. 15: World soccer's governing body FIFA announced that the FIFA Under-17 World Cup will be held annually instead of biennially, with the next five editions from 2025 to take place in Qatar.

Mar. 13: The US government and the United Nations expressed concerns about a contentious religion-based citizenship law in India, with the UN calling the legislation 'fundamentally discriminatory in nature'.

Mar. 13: Afghanistan defeated Ireland to complete a 2-0 victory in the three-match ODI series.

Mar. 13: Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal won a

You can often
change your
circumstances
by changing
your attitude

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

The man who doesn't
make up his mind
to cultivate the
habit of thinking
misses the greatest
pleasure in life.

~ Thomas Edison

You cannot change
your FUTURE,
you can change
your HABITS.
And surely your
HABITS will change
your Future.

~ Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

GK Tidbits

Congreso de los Diputados (Congress of Deputies) and the Senate, is the parliament of: **Spain**

71. Wafa is the state-run news agency of: **The Palestinian Authority**

72. The International Day to Combat Islamophobia is observed on: **March 15**

73. The International Day to Combat Islamophobia was designated by the United Nations in: **2022**

74. When bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines making infections harder to treat, it is called: **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**

75. The smallest piece of information storage in computing is: **A bit (binary digit)**

76. The number of languages, the Indian Constitution recognizes as official is: **22**

77. In Machine Learning, parameters are also known as: **Hyperparameters**

78. The UAE was placed under closer scrutiny by the FATF in: **2022**

79. The FATF was established in 1989 by: **G7 countries**

80. The first commercial spacecraft to make a touchdown on the moon is: **Odysseus**

81. US Spacecraft Odysseus, which has become the first US-made spacecraft to touch down on the moon in 50 years, was built and flown by Texas-based company: **Intuitive Machines**

82. International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) was founded in: **1923**

83. The process of splitting heavy atomic nuclei into lighter nuclei, releasing a large amount of energy, is called: **Fission**

84. The EU's naval mission to protect Red Sea shipping from Yemen's Houthi rebels is named: **Aspides**

85. Red Sea is a seawater inlet of: **Indian Ocean**

86. Saturn's moon Mimas was discovered in 1789 by English astronomer: **William Herschel**

87. The Bubonic Plague is often referred to as: **Black Death**

88. The first international union dedicated to advancing various aspects of astronomy was: **International Astronomical Union (IAU)**

89. The International Astronomical Union (IAU) was established in: **1919**

90. The Oslo I Accord was signed in 1993 and the Oslo II Accord in: **1995**

91. The Academy Awards is commonly known as:

The Oscars

92. The foundation marker for coastal nations to establish their maritime jurisdiction claims is called: **Territorial sea baseline**

93. The country that is ninth largest in the world and has Astana as its capital is: **Kazakhstan**

94. The act of deliberately ending a person's life to eliminate pain or suffering is: **Euthanasia**

95. The Human Development Report is published by: **UNDP**

96. The current Taiwanese island became a Japanese colony in: **1895**

97. Coal gasification is a thermo-chemical process that converts coal primarily into carbon monoxide and: **Hydrogen**

98. The optical fibre works on the principle of: **Total Internal Reflection**

99. A company that has attained a valuation of more than \$10 bn is called a: **Decacorn**

100. The length of Iran-Pakistan border, also known as the Goldsmith Line, is: **909 km**

MCOs / NATIONAL

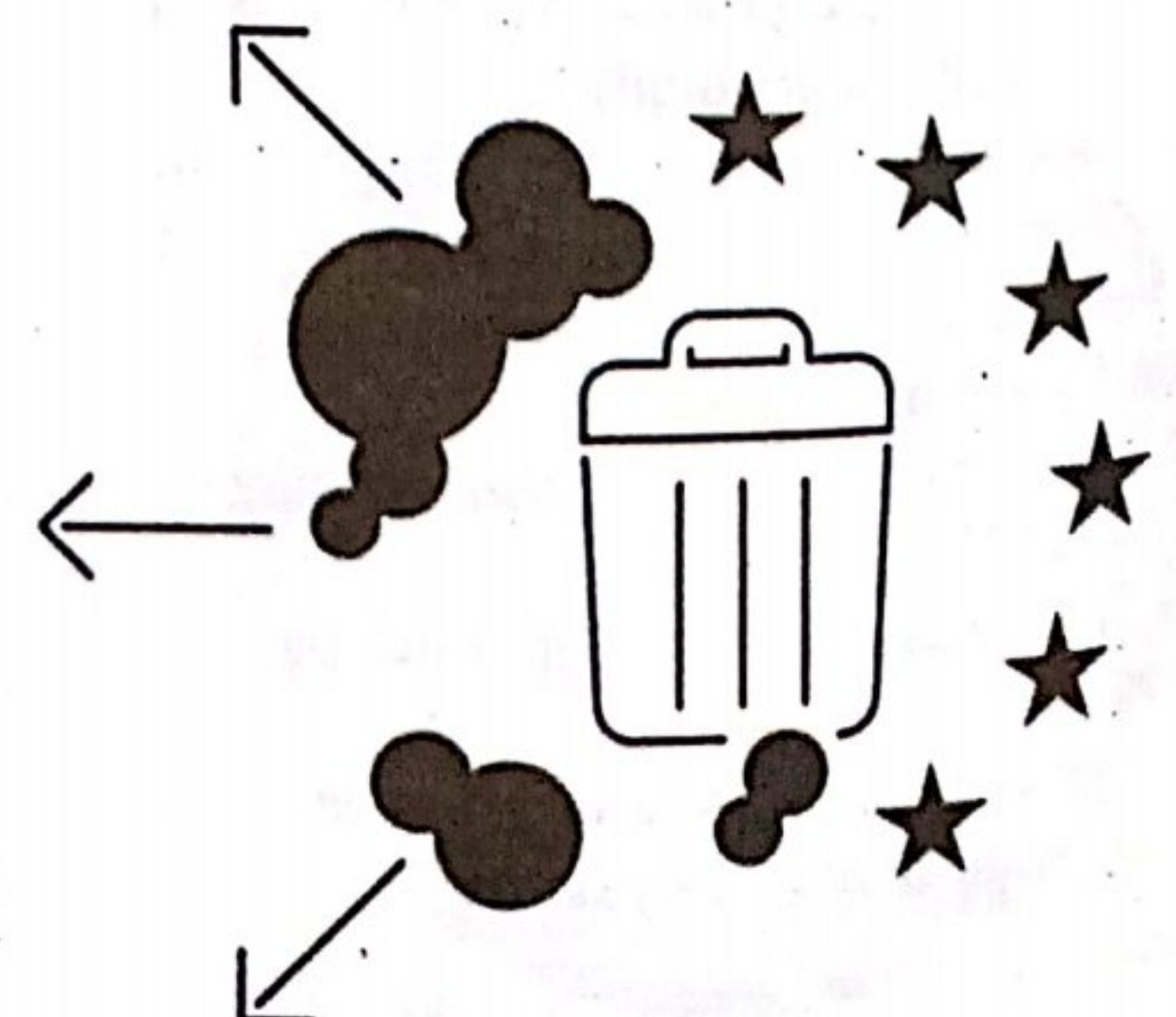
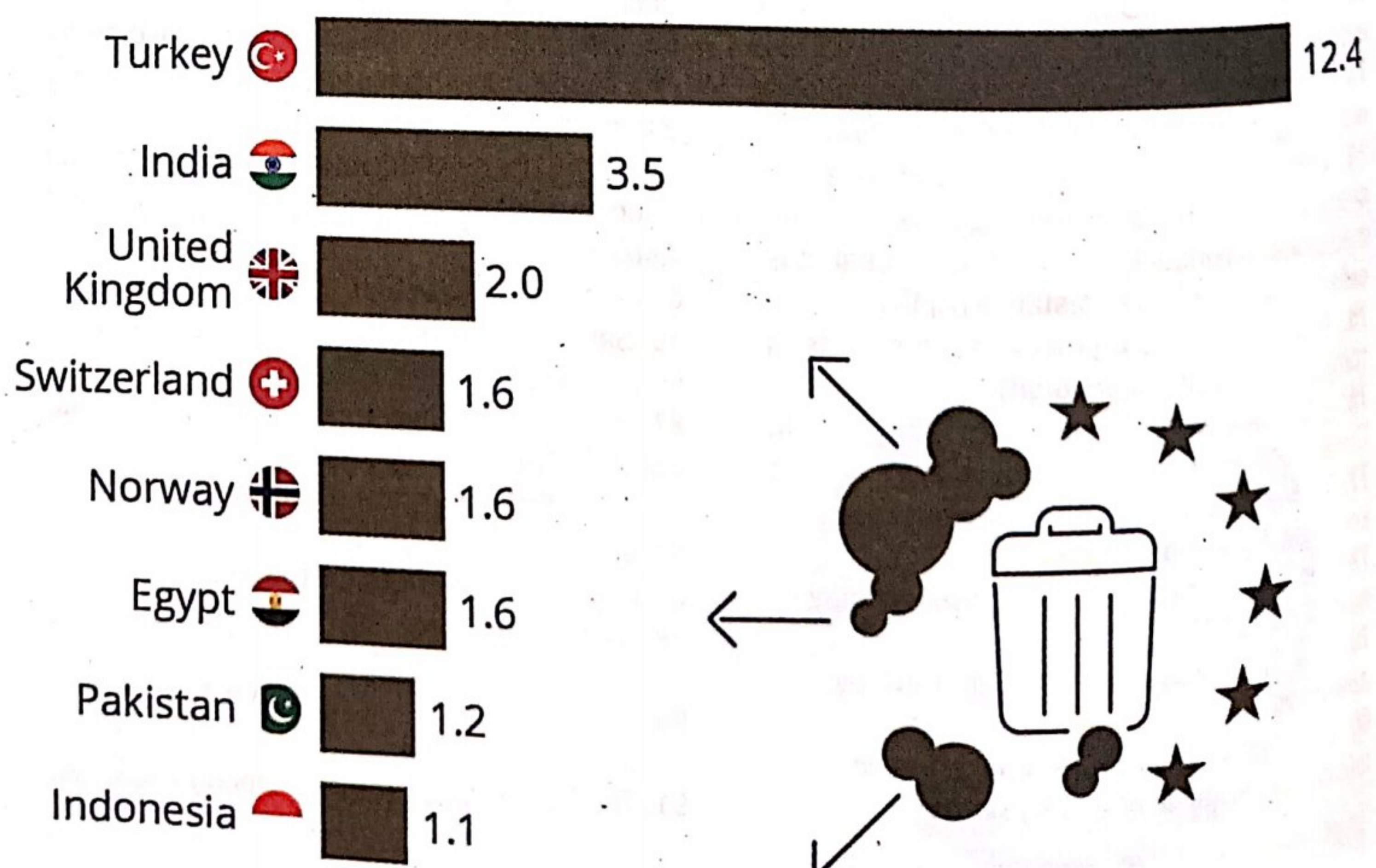
1. The only Asian country to be downgraded in the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2023 report is _____.
(a) *Pakistan* (b) Afghanistan
(c) India (d) Bangladesh
2. On Feb. 16, the Apex Committee of the SIFC approved the plan to increase the country's tax-to-GDP ratio to 18% by _____ from the current 8.5%.
(a) 2026 (b) *2029*
(c) 2030 (d) 2035
3. On Feb. 17, the FAO announced to implement a Sustainable and Regenerative Management of Rice Production to enhance sustainable rice production landscapes in _____.
(a) *Sindh* (b) Punjab
(c) GB (d) AJK
4. The first match of the HBL PSL was played in _____.
(a) *Lahore* (b) Multan
(c) Gwadar (d) Karachi
5. On Feb. 19, the PCB operations were put directly under the _____.
(a) PSB (b) Federal Cabinet
(c) IPC Ministry (d) *PM Office*
6. Saad Ahmed Waraich is Pakistan's new charge d'affaires in _____.
(a) Afghanistan (b) Australia
(c) *India* (d) Canada
7. In 2023, cyberattacks in Pakistan recorded an increase of _____.
(a) 15% (b) *17%*
(c) 21% (d) 29%
8. The National Coalition for Social Justice was launched on _____.
(a) *Feb. 20* (b) Feb. 21
(c) Feb. 24 (d) Feb. 25
9. The state-of-the-art school named 'Tahafuz Daras Gah' for transgender children has opened in _____.
(a) Gujranwala (b) Multan
(c) *Lahore* (d) Rawalpindi
10. On Feb. 23, the federal government appointed Arshad Ali Jadoon as Chairman of Press Council of Pakistan for a period of _____ years.
(a) Two (b) *Three*
(c) Five (d) Seven
11. On Feb. 23, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended the elevation of the Chief Justice of the _____ High Court Naeem Akhtar Afghan to Supreme Court as a judge.
(a) *Balochistan* (b) Islamabad
(c) Sindh (d) Peshawar
12. The length of the proposed Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway (M-6) will be _____.
(a) 229 km (b) 289 km
(c) *306 km* (d) 334 km

13. The famous Ichhra (Lahore) incident in which police rescued a woman from a mob who wanted to punish her for allegedly wearing a dress adorned with what they thought were holy verses happened on _____.
(a) *Feb. 25* (b) Feb. 26
(c) Feb. 27 (d) Feb. 28
14. On _____, the Punjab Assembly elected Maryam Nawaz as the first woman chief minister of the province.
(a) Feb. 23 (b) Feb. 24
(c) Feb. 25 (d) *Feb. 26*
15. On Feb. 26, Syed Murad Ali Shah was elected as the Sindh chief minister for the _____ time.
(a) Second (b) *Third*
(c) Fourth (d) Fifth
16. *Yadgar-i-Dastoor* and *Bagh-i-Dastoor* have been inaugurated in _____.
(a) *Islamabad* (b) Rawalpindi
(c) Quetta (d) Karachi
17. On Feb. 29, the inaugural session of the _____ National Assembly of Pakistan was held.
(a) 15th (b) *16th*
(c) 18th (d) 20th
18. On Mar. 01, PML-N's Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and _____ Ghulam Mustafa Shah were elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively, of the National Assembly.
(a) JUI-F's (b) *PPP's*

- (c) MQM's (d) GDA's
19. On Mar. 01, _____ candidate Sarfraz Bugti was elected as the Balochistan Chief Minister.
(a) BAP (b) *PPP*
(c) PML-N (d) PkMAP
20. On _____, Ali Amin Gandapur was elected as the chief minister of KP.
(a) *Mar. 01* (b) Mar. 02
(c) Mar. 03 (d) Mar. 04
21. On Mar. 03, Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the _____ prime minister of Pakistan.
(a) 19th (b) 22nd
(c) *24th* (d) 27th
22. The candidate who lost to Shehbaz Sharif in the election for the Prime Minister of Pakistan was _____.
(a) Asad Qaisar (b) Gohar Ali Khan
(c) *Omar Ayub* (d) Hamid Raza
23. On _____, renowned singer Dr Amjad Pervaiz passed away.
(a) Mar. 02 (b) *Mar. 03*
(c) Mar. 04 (d) Mar. 05
24. On Mar. 04, two Pakistani businesswomen - Unilever Pakistan CEO _____ and PureHealth cofounder Shaista Asif - were recognized among Forbes in its '100 Most Powerful Businesswomen 2024' list.
(a) Muniba Mazari (b) *Shazia Syed*
(c) Ayesha Malik (d) Perniya Khan
25. In terms of potato production, Pakistan is the world's _____ largest country.

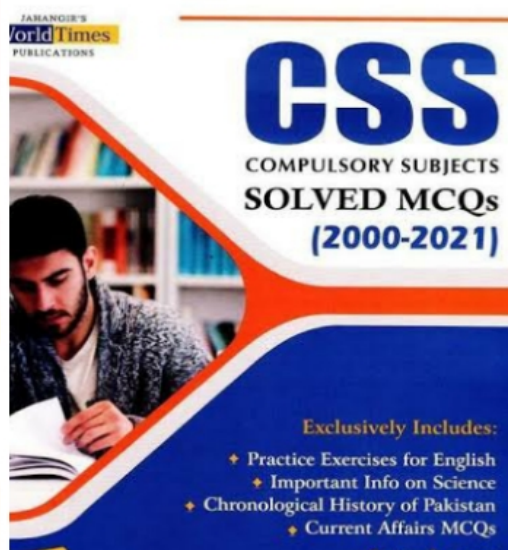
Where the EU Exports Its Waste

Main destinations for waste from the European Union in 2022 (in million tonnes)

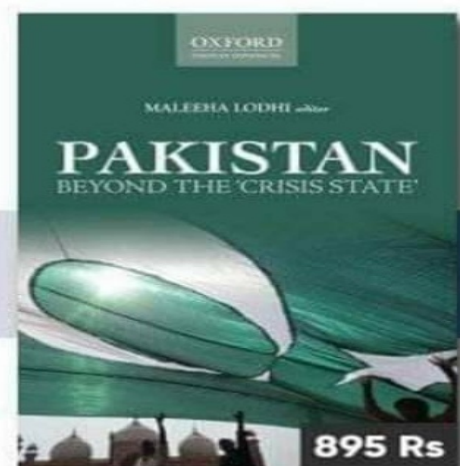
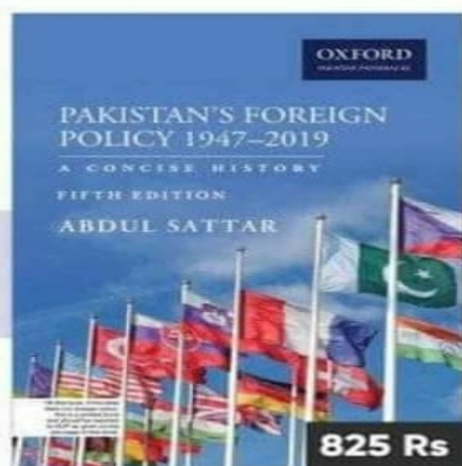
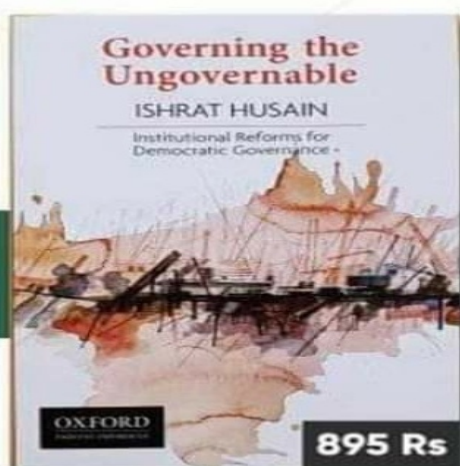
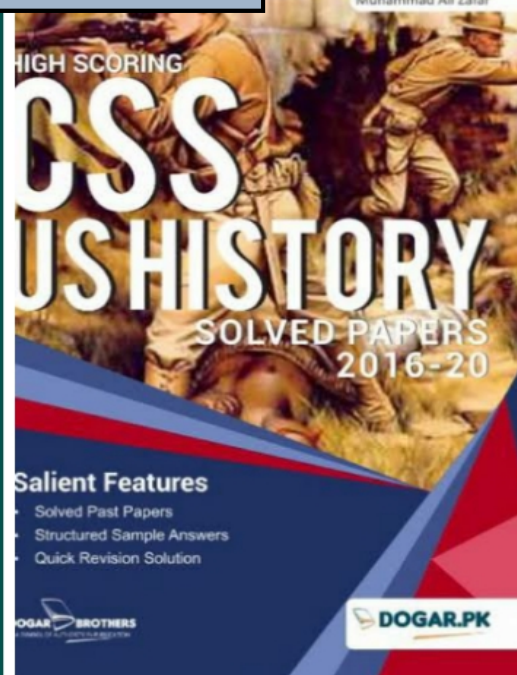
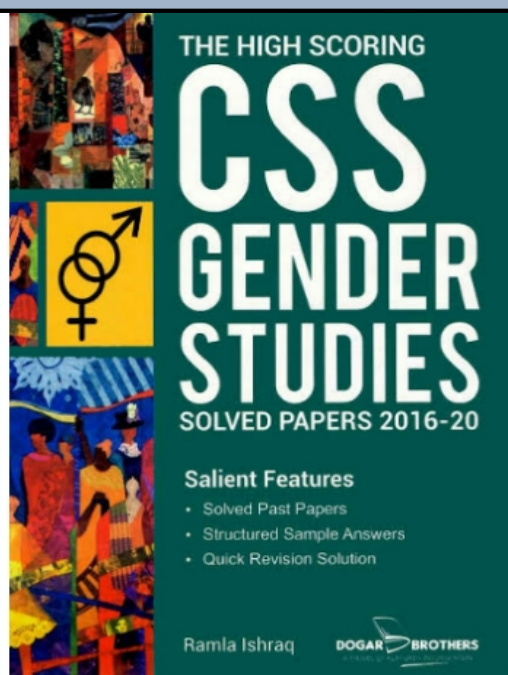
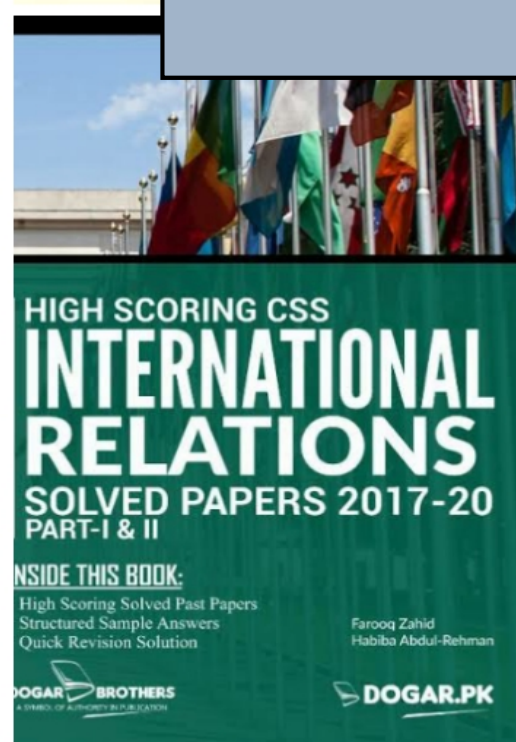




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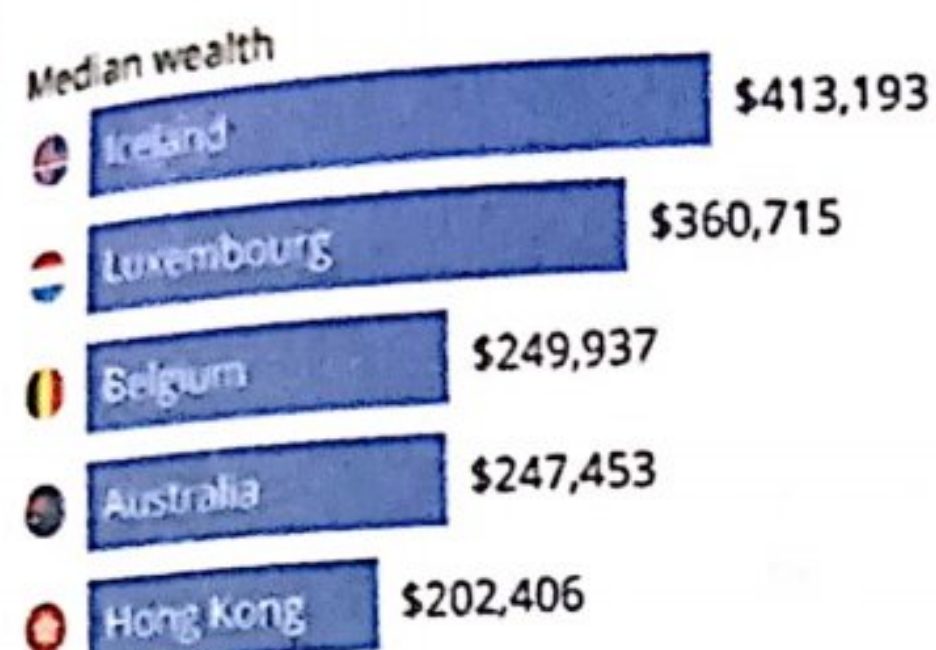
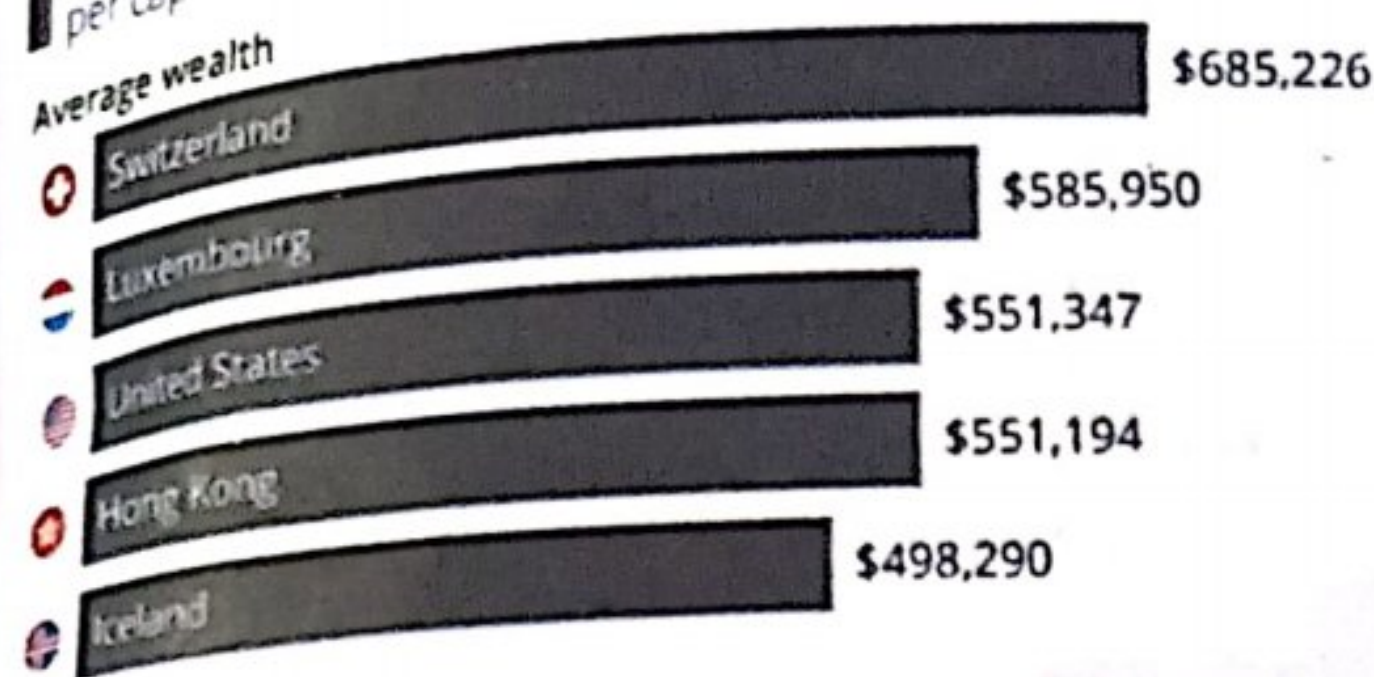
Governing The Ungovernable

Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2019

Pakistan Beyond The Crisis State

Which Countries Are Really the Richest?

Countries with the biggest average and median wealth per capita (2022)



- (a) Ninth (b) Tenth
(c) Eleventh (d) Twelfth

26. On _____, the Supreme Court ruled that the proceedings of the trial of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his execution during the military regime of Gen Ziaul Haq in 1979 did not meet the requirements of a fair trial and due process of law as enshrined in the Constitution.

- (a) Mar. 06 (b) Mar. 07
(c) Mar. 08 (d) Mar. 09

27. Ramesh Singh Arora, the first Sikh provincial minister of post-partition Punjab, is an MPA of _____.

- (a) PMLN (b) PPP
(c) PML (d) PTI

28. The current Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court is _____.

- (a) Shahid Bilal Hassan
(b) Shahid Jamil
(c) Ali Baqar Najafi
(d) Malik Shehzad Ahmed Khan

29. The Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute and Research Centre (PKLI&RC) is located in _____.

- (a) Lahore (b) Larkana
(c) Hyderabad (d) Karachi

30. On Mar. 08, CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz announced to increase the job quota of the women in the PPSC jobs from 10% to _____.

- (a) 12% (b) 15%
(c) 17.5% (d) 20%

31. On Mar. 08, _____ awarded prestigious Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT) Research Scholarships for Masters/Doctorate degrees to 11 Pakistani students.

- (a) Netherlands (b) Germany
(c) Japan (d) China

32. The International Women Safety App launched by the Punjab Govern-

ment is named _____.

- (a) Patron (b) bSafe
(c) Noonlight (d) Never Again

33. On Mar. 08, Pakistan's first Shariah-compliant Human Milk Bank was established at the Sindh Institute of Child Health and Neonatology in _____.

- (a) Thatta (b) Hyderabad
(c) Larkana (d) Karachi

34. The winner of the 31st National Shooting Championship is _____.

- (a) Punjab Police (b) WAPDA
(c) Pak Army (d) PAF

35. On Mar. 09, Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the _____ president of Pakistan.

- (a) 14th (b) 16th
(c) 18th (d) 20th

36. Pakistan has been ranked _____ among 191 countries on the UN Human Development Index.

- (a) 154th (b) 157th
(c) 159th (d) 161st

37. On _____, election for six vacant seats in the Senate of Pakistan was held.

- (a) Mar. 11 (b) Mar. 12
(c) Mar. 13 (d) Mar. 14

38. The first Pakistani woman to have been awarded the Diana Legacy Award is _____.

- (a) Malala Yousafzai (b) Fouzia Viqar
(c) Samina Baig (d) Alizey Khan

39. On _____, Pakistan Railways ran the longest freight train of its history.

- (a) Mar. 12 (b) Mar. 13
(c) Mar. 14 (d) Mar. 15

40. On Mar. 15, Pakistan's rising golf star Ahmad Baig won the Lexus Challenge 2024 which was held in _____.

- (a) USA (b) Vietnam
(c) UAE (d) India

INTERNATIONAL

1. The Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny died on _____.

- (a) Feb. 16 (b) Feb. 17
(c) Feb. 18 (d) Feb. 19

2. On Feb. 16, Ukraine signed a huge security deal with _____.

- (a) Belgium (b) Germany
(c) South Korea (d) France

3. On Feb. 16, Vanessa Dognac, the longest-serving foreign media correspondent in _____, was expelled for concerns over her reporting.

- (a) Bangladesh (b) Afghanistan
(c) India (d) Sri Lanka

4. On _____, Russia took full control

of the Ukrainian town of Avdiivka.

- (a) Feb. 15 (b) Feb. 16
(c) Feb. 17 (d) Feb. 18

5. On Feb. 19, the _____ formally launched a naval mission 'Aspides' to protect Red Sea shipping from Yemen's Houthi rebels.

- (a) USA (b) AUKUS
(c) INTERPOL (d) EU

6. On _____, Ameen Sayani, the iconic radio presenter of the popular show "Binaca Geet Mala," died.

- (a) Feb. 18 (b) Feb. 19
(c) Feb. 20 (d) Feb. 22

7. 'Long March 5' is the most powerful rocket of _____.

- (a) China (b) UK
(c) India (d) France

8. The first US touchdown on the lunar surface in more than half a century has been made possible by a rocket built by a Texas-based company _____.

- (a) Relativity Space
(b) Intuitive Machines
(c) Rocket Lab (d) Blue Origin

9. On Feb. 23, _____ signed a 10-year agreement on security cooperation with Ukraine.

- (a) Denmark (b) Canada
(c) Latvia (d) UK

10. On Feb. 23, the FATF dropped _____ from its 'grey list'.

- (a) Afghanistan (b) UAE
(c) Qatar (d) India

11. On Feb. 24, the leaders of Canada and _____ signed security agreements with Ukraine.

- (a) Hungary (b) Sweden
(c) Italy (d) France

12. On Feb. 24, _____ signed a deal with the UAE to develop a prime stretch of its Mediterranean coast.

- (a) China (b) India
(c) Turkiye (d) Egypt

13. On Feb. 25, an extraordinary session of the information ministers of the member states of the OIC was held in _____.

- (a) Istanbul (b) Riyadh
(c) Ankara (d) Abu Dhabi

14. On Feb. 25, India's _____ state scrapped an 89-year-old law that allowed marriage involving underage Muslims.

- (a) Assam (b) Tripura
(c) Uttarakhand (d) Gujarat

15. On Feb. 25, _____ clinched a record-extending 10th League Cup title.

- (a) Chelsea (b) Liverpool
(c) Man. United (d) Man. City

GK CORNER

16. Honor is a global technology company from _____.

- (a) *China* (b) Canada
(c) India (d) UAE

17. On Feb. 25, the _____ launched a \$50 million fund to help female entrepreneurs in developing countries.

- (a) UNDP (b) UN-Women
(c) *WTO* (d) World Bank

18. On Feb. 26, _____ parliament approved Sweden's NATO accession.

- (a) Turkiye's (b) *Hungary's*
(c) Finland's (d) US

19. The last hurdle to Sweden's NATO membership was its approval by the parliament of _____.

- (a) Turkiye (b) Finland
(c) *Hungary* (d) Sweden

20. On _____, veteran Indian Ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas passed away.

- (a) Feb. 22 (b) Feb. 23
(c) Feb. 24 (d) *Feb. 26*

21. India's maiden space voyage has been named as _____.

- (a) AstroSat-2 (b) NISAR
(c) Chandrayaan-4 (d) *Gaganyaan*

22. On Feb. 29, the troops of UN peacekeeping force MONUSCO began their withdrawal from _____.

- (a) Mali (b) Niger
(c) *DR Congo* (d) Morocco

23. On Mar. 01, former Canadian prime minister _____, who was a key figure behind the ground-breaking NAFTA, died.

- (a) Jean Chrétien (b) *Brian Mulroney*
(c) Kim Campbell (d) John Turner

24. On Mar. 01, Ireland claimed their first test victory by defeating _____.

- (a) *Afghanistan* (b) Sri Lanka
(c) New Zealand (d) Zimbabwe

25. On Mar. 01, Japanese comic creator Alcira Toriyama, who was best known for _____ series, died.

- (a) *Dragon Ball* (b) Shueisha
(c) Manga (d) Kung-Fu Master

26. On Mar. 02, Yang Siqi, a 14-year-old from _____, became the youngest surfer to qualify for the sport at the Olympics.

- (a) Philippines (b) *China*
(c) South Korea (d) Austria

27. On Mar. 04, _____ and the US militaries kicked off their spring drills - The Freedom Shield.

- (a) Japanese (b) *South Korean*
(c) Thai (d) Ukrainian

28. On Mar. 04, in a world first, _____ enshrined the right to abortion in its constitution.

- (a) Italy (b) *Germany*

(c) *France*

(d) Iceland

29. On Mar. 04, _____ opened a rebuilt Soviet-era air base - Kucova Air Base - to serve NATO aircraft.

- (a) Norway (b) Sweden
(c) *Albania* (d) Finland

30. Rosfinmonitoring is the financial monitoring agency of _____.

- (a) Germany (b) Italy
(c) *Russia* (d) Ukraine

31. On Mar. 07, _____ formally joined NATO after handing over the final documentation to the US government.

- (a) *Sweden* (b) Finland
(c) Iceland (d) Ukraine

32. On Mar. 10, _____ and the four-member European trade bloc EFTA signed a \$100 billion trade and economic partnership agreement.

- (a) Russia (b) *India*
(c) Japan (d) China

33. On Mar. 11, the Indian government announced rules to implement the "anti-Muslim" Citizenship Amendment Act which was passed in _____.

- (a) 2019 (b) 2020
(c) 2021 (d) 2022

34. On Mar. 11, "Oppenheimer," the blockbuster biopic about the race to build the first atomic bomb, claimed _____ Academy Awards.

- (a) Six (b) *Seven*
(c) Eight (d) Nine

35. On Mar. 11, the US women's national team defeated _____ to win the inaugural CONCACAF W Gold Cup.

- (a) Argentina (b) Croatia
(c) *Brazil* (d) Mexico

36. On Mar. 13, the US House of Representatives passed a bill seeking to ban _____ for users across the country.

- (a) Huwai (b) Honour
(c) *TikTok* (d) Daily Motion

37. On _____, the European Parliament gave approval to EU rules to govern artificial intelligence.

- (a) Mar. 10 (b) Mar. 11
(c) Mar. 12 (d) *Mar. 13*

38. The current Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Simon Stiell, belongs to _____.

- (a) New Zealand (b) Nauru
(c) *Grenada* (d) Seychelles

39. The Catalanian people are trying to gain independence from _____.

- (a) Denmark (b) *Spain*
(c) Norway (d) Sweden

40. On Mar. 14, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas named _____ as prime minister of the Palestinian Authority.

- (a) Ramiz Jaraisy
(b) Yahya Hammuda
(c) Mohammad Shtayyeh
(d) *Mohammad Mustafa* 

ISRAEL DESTROYS GAZA'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

NO FULLY FUNCTIONAL HOSPITALS IN GAZA

Only **12 of over 36** of Gaza hospitals left partially functioning (since Oct 7)

410 ATTACKS ON HEALTHCARE

685 health personnel killed

902 injured

269 medical staff detained

155 healthcare institutions destroyed

32 hospitals damaged

192 ambulances damaged

Source: WHO, Euro-Med HRM, Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza

